

Tamms Correctional
Center

Public Comments

As of 05/21/2012

5/1/2012

Honorable Senators and Representatives:

Each Senator and Representative has an OBLIGATION to save the State of Illinois from bankruptcy and not just jobs in his own district. TAMMS cost \$26,000,000 (that is 26 million) a year. It must be CLOSED or none of you are serious about saving the State of Illinois.

I, too, hate to see anyone lose their jobs as I was asked. However, the Director Tony Godinez from IDOC stated that some employees from Tamms will be able to transfer their jobs with IDOC to Vienna, Shawnee, or within a 90 miles radius. It has been stated that the remaining 180 inmates are being transferred to the death row cells in Pontiac or a mental facility prison. There have been two attempted suicides in Tamms within the past two week. **Along with humanitarian reasons, CLOSING TAMMS should be a very easy decision to be made.**

My husband and I moved five times in 20 years with his company/career. **State employees** can move for their jobs as well.

CLOSING TAMMS SUPERMAX PRISON IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO!

Tamms IS "Man's Inhumanity-to-Man!" Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,
Janice E. Pohlman
Quincy, IL 62305



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 1, 2012

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**Committee Offers Mixed Support for Notorious Supermax
CoGFA Never Met a Prison It Didn't Like
Governor and More Important Committees Still Support Closure**

Springfield – Governor Quinn's decision to close Tamms supermax prison was the subject of a vote on Tuesday, May 1 by the Commission of Government Forecasting and Accountability (CoGFA), co-chaired by State Senator Jeffrey Schoenberg and State Representative Patricia Bellock. The committee's role is purely advisory and as expected, it voted to keep the facility open. Since the committee was established, it has never voted in support of closing a prison — except Thomson which was never really open.

At \$65,000 per person per year, Tamms is the most expensive per capita in the state. It is also the most inefficient. It has a capacity for 500, but houses about 180 men. Although there is a strong fiscal argument for transferring just a few men in order to save 26 million dollars, some legislators cited safety concerns as a reason to keep spending.

Proponents of closure, including Tamms Year Ten, a coalition that has worked to reform the prison since 2008, say that the scare campaign to keep Tamms open sometimes sidesteps the facts. For example, there is no evidence that the opening of the supermax in 1998 reduced violence in Illinois prisons, which in reality began dropping as the result of system-wide reforms two years earlier. Indeed, published research from other states shows that long-term solitary confinement increases the likelihood of violent recidivism.

Since its opening, Tamms has been mired in controversy. Its regime of sensory deprivation and long-term solitary confinement has been condemned as cruel, inhuman and degrading by lawyers, judges, members of the clergy, and human rights advocates. Such isolation, when it is prolonged, indefinite or used on people with mental illnesses rises to the level of torture, according to Juan E. Méndez, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture who issued a report last year calling for a global ban on the use of solitary confinement over 15 days.

Many prisoners at Tamms suffer from serious mental illnesses; some attempt suicide, and other engage in acts of extreme self-mutilation. All men at Tamms are held in isolation 24 hours per day for years at a stretch—sometimes a decade or more. There are no communal activities and men only leave their cells to shower, or receive at most an hour a day of solitary exercise in a small, concrete pen. Food is pushed through a slot in the door. Cell doors are made of solid steel, perforated with small holes, and all face the same direction, making communication difficult if not impossible. There is no physical or face-to-face interaction between the men at Tamms.

The vote against closure was the result of intense lobbying from AFSCME and downstate special interests. Since Governor Quinn's announcement about closure, they have waged a non-stop campaign to protect the jobs of corrections officers and staff despite that fact that most laid-off employees will be able to transfer to short-staffed prisons nearby. Closure advocates have been surprised by the intensity of union lobbying and the amount of misinformation. Union representatives have repeatedly asserted that there were dozens of killings of IDOC guards before Tamms opened, but none after. However published data shows that the last IDOC staff death occurred in 1989, almost a decade *before* the opening of Tamms.

In the more important committees and in the wider legislature, support for Tamms continues to ebb. The House Appropriations Committee will hold a hearing on Wednesday on a budget bill that slashes funding for the supermax. In testimony before that committee on April 18, IDOC director Tony Godinez testified that in his professional estimation, there are only 25 people in Tamms who require such continuous intense security. Laurie Jo Reynolds, a Tamms Year Ten organizer, said she wasn't surprised by this revelation. She testified in the committee that it is not unusual for someone to spend years in Tamms and then be transferred to a medium security facility. "It would shock any taxpayer to learn that we are paying 27 million a year to keep 25 guys secure. It is disappointing that AFSCME is employing a scare campaign to try to keep Tamms open. Illinois can't afford fear-based policies and we can't live in the past. We can't afford a supermax, and we don't need one."

David Fathi, director of the National Prison Project for the ACLU, testified at the CoGFA hearing about the national trend to close supermaxes and reduce the use of segregation in order to reduce violence and reinvest scarce resources. Fathi stated that in addition to "saving millions of dollars, these states have experienced no adverse effect on prison or public safety." He highlighted the case of Mississippi, where officials drastically reduced the supermax prison population and then finally shut it down in 2010. Fathi said they closed it for financial reasons, but were pleased by the results: violence dropped. In Maine, the prison director Joseph Ponte all but eliminated the use of solitary confinement at their supermax and put the savings in mental health treatment, also with much better behavioral outcomes. Ponte spoke at the CGFA hearings about his success story in Maine. Colorado is following our lead. They opened a supermax facility just 18 months ago, and has already decided to shutter it.

The decision whether or not to close Tamms now rests with Governor Quinn and the leaders of the House and Senate. They may choose to either defund or defend the most notorious and expensive prison in Illinois.

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**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF
THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION**

**Hearing on the
Proposed Closure of Tamms Correctional Center**

**Submitted to the Illinois Commission on Government Forecasting
and Accountability**

April 2, 2012

ACLU National Prison Project
David Fathi, Director

ACLU of Illinois
Mary Dixon, Legislative Director

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), founded in 1920, is a nationwide, non-profit, nonpartisan organization of more than 500,000 members dedicated to the principles of liberty and equality embodied in the Constitution and this nation's civil rights laws. Since 1972 the ACLU National Prison Project has worked to ensure that our nation's prisons comply with the Constitution, domestic law, and international human rights principles.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization committed to protect and to expand the civil liberties and civil rights of persons in Illinois. The organization has engaged in this constitutionally protected pursuit through public education and advocacy before courts, legislatures, and administrative agencies. The organization has more than 20,000 members and supporters dedicated to protecting and expanding the civil rights and civil liberties guaranteed by the Constitutions and civil rights laws of the United States and the State of Illinois.

The ACLU respectfully urges the Commission to approve the permanent closure of Tamms Correctional Center.

The damaging effects of solitary confinement are well known and undisputed.

Tamms is a supermax facility in which prisoners – many of them mentally ill – are held in solitary confinement, sometimes for years on end.¹ A 2009 study by the *Belleville News-*

¹ “Solitary confinement” is defined as “the physical and social isolation of individuals who are confined to their cells for 22 to 24 hours a day.” Interim Report of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on Torture and

Democrat found that 54 Tamms prisoners had been in continuous solitary confinement for more than ten years.²

The shattering effects of solitary confinement on the human psyche have long been well known. In 1842, Charles Dickens reported on the use of solitary confinement in American prisons:

I believe that very few men are capable of estimating the immense amount of torture and agony which this dreadful punishment, prolonged for years, inflicts upon the sufferers...there is a depth of terrible endurance in it which none but the sufferers themselves can fathom, and which no man has a right to inflict upon his fellow-creature. I hold this slow and daily tampering with the mysteries of the brain, to be immeasurably worse than any torture of the body[.]³

In 1890, the United States Supreme Court described the devastating effects of solitary confinement as practiced in the nation's early days:

A considerable number of the prisoners fell, after even a short confinement, into a semi-fatuous condition, from which it was next to impossible to arouse them, and others became violently insane; others, still, committed suicide; while those who stood the ordeal better were not generally reformed, and in most cases did not recover sufficient mental activity to be of any subsequent service to the community.⁴

Half a century later, the Court referred to solitary confinement as one of the techniques of "physical and mental torture" that have been used by governments to coerce confessions.⁵

More recently, the Chicago-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit observed that "the record shows, what anyway seems pretty obvious, that isolating a human being from other human beings year after year or even month after month can cause substantial psychological damage, even if the isolation is not total."⁶ The court recognized that "there is plenty of medical and psychological literature concerning the ill effects of solitary confinement (of which segregation is a variant)[.]"⁷

In *Jones 'El v. Berge*, a Wisconsin federal court found that solitary confinement is:

known to cause severe psychiatric morbidity, disability, suffering and mortality. ... The extremely isolating conditions in supermaximum confinement cause [Segregated Housing Unit] Syndrome in relatively healthy prisoners who have histories of serious mental illness, as well as prisoners who have never suffered a breakdown in the past but are prone to break down when the stress and trauma become exceptionally severe. Many

Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, delivered to the General Assembly, U.N. Doc. A/66/268 (Aug. 5, 2011), at 9.

² "Trapped in Tamms: In Illinois' only supermax facility, inmates are in cells 23 hours a day," *Belleville News-Democrat*, August 2, 2009, available at <http://www.bnd.com/2009/08/02/865377/trapped-in-tamms-in-illinois-only.html>.

³ Charles Dickens, AMERICAN NOTES 146 (Fromm Int'l 1985) (1842).

⁴ *In re Medley*, 134 U.S. 160, 168 (1890).

⁵ *Chambers v. Florida*, 309 U.S. 227, 237-38 (1940).

⁶ *Davenport v. DeRobertis*, 844 F.2d 1310, 1313 (7th Cir. 1988).

⁷ *Id.* at 1316.

prisoners are not capable of maintaining their sanity in such an extreme and stressful environment; a high number attempt suicide.⁸

And in 2010, an Illinois federal court found that “Tamms imposes drastic limitations on human contact, so much so as to inflict lasting psychological and emotional harm on inmates confined there for long periods.”⁹

These judicial findings are supported by a large body of psychiatric literature. In a 2005 submission to the United States Supreme Court, a group of psychologists and psychiatrists reviewed this literature and concluded that “no study of the effects of solitary or supermax-like confinement that lasted longer than 60 days failed to find evidence of negative psychological effects.”¹⁰ They continued: “The overall consistency of these findings - the same or similar conclusions reached by different researchers examining different facilities, in different parts of the world, in different decades, using different research methods - is striking. The well-documented psychological risks created by long-term prison isolation are matters of grave concern[.]”¹¹

Other states have reduced solitary confinement and closed supermax prisons with no adverse effect on prison or public safety.

A number of states have dramatically reduced their use of solitary confinement, preserving prison and public safety and saving millions of dollars in the process. Mississippi reduced the population of one supermax institution from 1000 to 150 and eventually closed the unit entirely.¹² Mississippi prison officials estimate that diverting prisoners from solitary confinement under the state’s new model saves about \$8 million annually.¹³ At the same time, changes in the management of the solitary confinement population reduced violence levels by 70%.¹⁴

In March 2011, the Maine Department of Corrections recommended tighter controls on the use of special management units (SMUs). Due to subsequent reforms, the SMU population was cut by over fifty percent; expanded access to programming and social stimulation for prisoners was implemented; and personal approval of the Commissioner of Corrections is now required to place a prisoner in the SMU for longer than 72 hours.¹⁵

The Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC) recently identified solitary confinement reform as a management priority and made a formal request to the National

⁸ *Jones v. El v. Berge*, 164 F. Supp. 2d 1096, 1101-02 (W.D. Wis. 2001).

⁹ *Westefer v. Snyder*, 725 F.Supp.2d 735, 769 (S.D. Ill. 2010).

¹⁰ *Wilkinson v. Austin*, No. 04-495, Brief of Professors and Practitioners of Psychology and Psychiatry as Amicus Curiae in Support of Respondent, 2005 WL 539137 (March 3, 2005), at *4.

¹¹ *Id.* at *22.

¹² Terry A. Kupers, et al., *Beyond Supermax Administrative Segregation: Mississippi’s Experience Rethinking Prison Classification and Creating Alternative Mental Health Programs*, 36 CRIM. JUST. & BEHAV. 1037, 1041 (2009); John Buntin, *Exodus: How America’s Reddest State – And Its Most Notorious Prison – Became a Model of Corrections Reform*, 23 GOVERNING 20, 27 (2010).

¹³ *Presley v. Epps*, No. 4:05-CV-00148-JAD (N.D. Miss. Aug. 2, 2010), transcript of Proceedings at 8.

¹⁴ Kupers et al., *supra* note 12, at 1043.

¹⁵ Lance Tapley, *Reform Comes to the Supermax*, PORTLAND PHOENIX, May 25, 2011, available at <http://portland.thephoenix.com/news/121171-reform-comes-to-the-supermax/>.

Institute of Corrections, U.S. Department of Justice, for an external review and analysis of its administrative segregation operations. As a result of the reforms implemented through this process in the last few months, CDOC has reduced its administrative segregation population by 36.9%.¹⁶ After taking these steps to reduce the use of administrative segregation, the CDOC recently announced the closure of a 316-bed supermax facility, which is projected to save the state \$4.5 million in Fiscal Year 2012-13 and \$13.6 million in Fiscal Year 2013-14.¹⁷

None of these states have experienced any adverse effect on prison or public safety as a result of reducing their use of solitary confinement. This is not surprising, as evidence shows that prisoners released from solitary confinement have higher recidivism rates than comparable prisoners released from general population.¹⁸

Solitary confinement is inconsistent with the U.S. Constitution and international human rights principles.

Because of the profoundly damaging effects of solitary confinement, particularly on prisoners with mental illness, a number of federal courts have ruled that conditions in supermax prisons like Tamms cause such extreme suffering that they violate the Constitution's prohibition on cruel and unusual punishments:

As the pain and suffering caused by a cat-o'-nine-tails lashing an inmate's back are cruel and unusual punishment by today's standards of humanity and decency, the pain and suffering caused by extreme levels of psychological deprivation are equally, if not more, cruel and unusual. The wounds and resulting scars, while less tangible, are no less painful and permanent when they are inflicted on the human psyche.

Before the court are levels of psychological deprivation that violate the United States Constitution's prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment. It has been shown that defendants are deliberately indifferent to a systemic pattern of extreme social isolation and reduced environmental stimulation. These deprivations are the cause of cruel and unusual pain and suffering by inmates in administrative segregation[.]¹⁹

¹⁶ COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE SEGREGATION PLAN 1-2 (2012), available at <https://www.aclu.org/prisoners-rights/report-co-docs-implementation-administrative-segregation-plan>; see also Denise Maes, *Guest Column: Solitary Confinement Reform is Welcome Sign of Progress*, COLORADO SPRINGS GAZETTE, Jan. 27, 2012, available at www.gazette.com/common/printer/view.php?db=colgazette&id=132524.

¹⁷ News Release, Department of Corrections, *The Department of Corrections Announces the Closure of Colorado State Penitentiary II* (March 19, 2012), available at <http://www.doc.state.co.us/sites/default/files/Press%20release%20CSP%20II%20close%20%20Feb%201%202013.pdf>.

¹⁸ See, e.g., Lovell, David, L. Clark Johnson, and Kevin C. Cain, "Recidivism of Supermax Prisoners in Washington State," *Crime and Delinquency* 53 (October 2007): 633-656; MAUREEN L. O'KEEFE, CO. DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS, ANALYSIS OF COLORADO'S ADMINISTRATIVE SEGREGATION 25 (2005), available at <http://www.doc.state.co.us/sites/default/files/opa/AdSegReport.pdf>.

¹⁹ *Ruiz v. Johnson*, 37 F.Supp.2d 855, 914 -15 (S.D. Tex. 1999), *rev'd on other grounds*, 243 F.3d 941 (5th Cir. 2001), *adhered to on remand*, 154 F.Supp.2d 975 (S.D. Tex. 2001).

A federal court in California characterized housing prisoners with mental illness in a supermax unit as “the mental equivalent of putting an asthmatic in a place with little air to breathe:”

[S]ubjecting individuals to conditions that are “very likely” to render them psychotic or otherwise exacerbate a serious mental illness cannot be squared with evolving standards of humanity or decency, especially when certain aspects of those conditions appear to bear little relation to security concerns. A risk this grave – this shocking and indecent – simply has no place in civilized society.²⁰

And a federal court in Wisconsin ordered prison officials to remove prisoners with mental illness from the state’s Supermax Correctional Institution.²¹

Conditions at Tamms are also inconsistent with international human rights principles. In a global study on solitary confinement, presented last year to the United Nations General Assembly, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture called on all countries to ban the practice, except in very exceptional circumstances, as a last resort, and for as short a time as possible. The Special Rapporteur concluded that solitary confinement can amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and in some cases even torture. He recommended a ban on solitary confinement exceeding 15 days, and the abolition of solitary confinement for juveniles and mentally disabled persons.²²

The U.N. Committee Against Torture, the official body established pursuant to the Convention Against Torture – a treaty ratified by the United States – has also recommended that the practice of long-term solitary confinement be abolished altogether.²³ When the Committee reviewed practices in the United States, it expressed grave concern about the extremely harsh regime imposed on prisoners in supermax prisons. The Committee specifically noted the prolonged isolation prisoners experience and the effect such treatment has on their mental health, and recommended that the United States “should review the regime imposed on [prisoners] in ‘supermaximum prisons,’ in particular the practice of prolonged isolation.”²⁴

Because it is inconsistent with international human rights norms, the use of supermax prisons like Tamms threatens the ability of the United States to secure the extradition of criminal suspects from other nations. The European Court of Human Rights has temporarily blocked the extradition of three terrorism suspects to the United States on the ground that if convicted, their eventual confinement in a U.S. supermax prison might violate the European Convention on Human Rights.²⁵

²⁰*Madrid v. Gomez*, 889 F. Supp. 1146, 1265, 1266 (N.D. Cal. 1995).

²¹*Jones’El v. Berge*, 164 F.Supp.2d 1096, 1125-26 (W.D. Wis. 2001).

²² Interim Report of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, delivered to the General Assembly, U.N. Doc. A/66/268 (Aug. 5, 2011).

²³ See, e.g., U.N. Comm. Against Torture, Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 19 of the Convention: Denmark, ¶ 14, U.N. Doc. CAT/C/DNK/CO/5 (July 16, 2007).

²⁴ U.N. Comm. Against Torture, 36th Session, Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 19 of the Convention: Conclusions and Recommendations of the Committee Against Torture: United States of America, U.N. Doc. CAT/C/USA/CO/2, at ¶ 36 (May 18, 2006).

²⁵ European Court of Human Rights, Press release issued by the Registrar, *Babar Ahmad and Others v. the United Kingdom* (application nos. 24027/07, 11949/08 and 36742/08), “Applications From Alleged International Terrorists Detained In The UK Pending Extradition to the USA Partly Admissible,” July 8, 2010, available at

Conclusion

Closing Tamms will advance human rights, preserve public safety, and save Illinois taxpayers tens of millions of dollars. The ACLU respectfully urges the Commission to take this long overdue step.

March 30, 2012



The Honorable Patti Bellock
Co-Chairperson
Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability
1 South Cass Avenue
Suite 205
Westmont, Illinois 60559

Re: Proposed closure of Tamms Correctional Center

Dear Chairperson Bellock:

I write to express the strong support of Mental Health America of Illinois for the closure of Tamms Correctional Center. MHAIA supports this closure for the following reasons:

- Tamms is a “supermax” prison designed to be so punitive that prisoners in other correctional facilities will behave better out of fear of being sent to this horrible place. This idea simply has not worked. Too many of the persons who cannot follow the rules in prisons are inmates who have untreated mental illnesses and do not understand prison rules or lack the ability, due to their illnesses, to follow the rules. A disproportionate number of these persons end up being transferred to Tamms.
- Tamms is designed and functions as a sensory deprivation environment. This environment constitutes torture for persons with mental illnesses and often causes inmates without a mental illness to develop one. That is why these facilities have consistently been condemned by human rights groups. Other countries and now a growing number of states have recognized the inhumanity and ineffectiveness of sensory deprivation as a criminal sanction. The ineffectiveness of Tamms has been demonstrated by its change in function. Instead of the brief stays at Tamms which were originally intended, many inmates now stay indefinitely. The punishment is not making them “better”.
- Illinois has responded to the extremely high prevalence of mental illnesses at Tamms by bringing mental health resources to Tamms. That is commendable. But it is difficult, if not impossible, to improve the mental health of someone in an environment which creates and exacerbates mental illnesses. This is like trying to treat someone’s fever by taking them to a sauna. Closing Tamms will allow Illinois to transfer mentally ill inmates and the treatment resources currently at that facility to other facilities where these inmates may actually recover from their illnesses.
- Tamms is the most expensive prison in the state. The average cost for each inmate in the supermax section is over \$90,000 per year. We cannot afford to waste this money on such an ineffective and inhumane facility.

www.mhai.org

The Honorable Patti Bellock
March 30, 2012
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- People who commit crimes should be punished and the citizens of Illinois are entitled to be protected from criminal behavior, including criminal behavior committed by persons with mental illnesses. However, Tamms is not serving any legitimate punitive goal and is not making us safer.

MHAI urges COGFA to support the closure of this expensive, inhumane and ineffective facility.

Sincerely,



Mark J. Heyrman
Chair, Public Policy Committee
Writer's direct line: 773-753-4440

March 30, 2012



The Honorable Jeff Schoenberg
Co-Chairperson
Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability
20 Davis Street
Suite 102
Evanston, Illinois 60201

Re: Proposed closure of Tamms Correctional Center

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- Tamms is designed and functions as a sensory deprivation environment. This environment constitutes torture for persons with mental illnesses and often causes inmates without a mental illness to develop one. That is why these facilities have consistently been condemned by human rights groups. Other countries and now a growing number of states have recognized the inhumanity and ineffectiveness of sensory deprivation as a criminal sanction. The ineffectiveness of Tamms has been demonstrated by its change in function. Instead of the brief stays at Tamms which were originally intended, many inmates now stay indefinitely. The punishment is not making them “better”.
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Heyrman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark J. Heyrman
Chair, Public Policy Committee
Writer's direct line: 773-753-4440

Comments by Dr. Stuart Grassian, Dr. Craig Haney, and Dr. Terry Kupers to the April 2, 2012 Hearing of the Illinois Legislature Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability regarding the proposal to close Tamms Correctional Center

Tamms Correctional Center has been open for over ten years, and some of its resident prisoners have been at the facility since it opened. We have been informed that the Governor of Illinois has recommended that the Tamms facility be closed. As three long-time researchers and nationally recognized experts on the psychological effects of solitary confinement, we write to express our strong support of that recommendation.

We believe that the Governor's recommendation is entirely consistent with a growing national trend away from the use of long-term solitary confinement.¹ Of course, there are compelling economic justifications that partially explain this trend. Supermax prisons such as Tamms are very expensive to operate. In addition, however, there are important mental health concerns and public safety justifications that support this development. Research has shown that long-term solitary confinement places prisoners at grave risk of significant psychological harm.² Because this kind of confinement is not only painful but also potentially damaging—and, for some prisoners, perhaps

¹ Erica Goode, Prisons Rethink Isolation, Saving Money, Lives and Sanity, New York Times, March 10, 2012 [available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/11/us/rethinking-solitary-confinement.html?pagewanted=all>]

² Haney, C., and Lynch, M., Regulating Prisons of the Future: A Psychological Analysis of Supermax and Solitary Confinement, 23 New York University Review of Law and Social Change 477-570 (1997); Haney, C., Mental Health Issues in Long-Term Solitary and "Supermax" Confinement, 49 Crime & Delinquency 124 (2003); Cloyes, K., Lovell, D., Allen, D., & Rhodes, L., Assessment of Psychosocial Impairment in a Supermaximum Security Unit Sample, 33 Criminal Justice and Behavior 760-781 (2006).

irreversibly so—it can be a cruel and singularly inappropriate form of punishment. Beyond doing more to debilitate than rehabilitate the prisoners who are subjected to it, solitary confinement undermines the ability of many of them to succeed in the community after their eventual release from prison.³ This evidence—that it appears to increase rather than reduce recidivism—raises public safety concerns.

The structure and operation of supermaximum security units such as Tamms are conducive to the creation of a punitive atmosphere and even a “culture of cruelty” that can harden and dispirit prisoners and correctional officers alike. Aspects of its negative atmosphere and culture may spread to and negatively affect prevailing attitudes and practices in the larger correctional system. Moreover, supermax prisons such as Tamms do not reliably reduce violence or disciplinary infractions within the larger prison systems in which they function; in some instances they appear to make it worse.⁴ Nor do they alleviate the problem of prison gangs. The California Department of Corrections has aggressively pursued the use of long-term solitary confinement for more than 20 years and the state prison system is now plagued with perhaps the worst gang problem in the nation.

Our views on these matters are based on a careful review of the existing literature on solitary confinement and our own direct observations and analyses of the effects of long-term solitary confinement in work that we have been engaged in for more than three decades. Each of us has toured and inspected

³ For example, see: Lovell, D., Johnson, L., & Cain, K., Recidivism of Supermax Prisoners in Washington State, 53 *Crime & Delinquency* 633-656 (2007); Mears, D., & Bales, W., Supermax Incarceration and Recidivism, 47 *Criminology* 1131 (2009).

⁴ Briggs, C., Sundt, J., & Castellano, T., The Effect of Supermaximum Security Prisons on Aggregate Levels of Institutional Violence, 41 *Criminology* 1341-1376 (2003).

numerous “supermax”-type penal institutions, interviewed and evaluated numerous prisoners confined under these severe conditions, and discussed isolation practices and procedures with correctional staff and officials from around the country. We have sometimes been asked to render expert opinions in legal cases that were focused on whether being housed in supermax facilities such as Tamms constitutes "cruel and unusual punishment." One of us (Dr. Haney) is an academic psychologist and two of us (Drs. Grassian & Kupers) are university-affiliated psychiatrists.

More specifically, Dr. Haney is a social psychologist and Professor of Psychology. He began his study of prisons as one of the principal researchers who conducted the well-known "Stanford Prison Experiment" in the early 1970s, and has studied the psychology of imprisonment in actual prisons since then.⁵ Dr. Haney’s study of long-term solitary confinement includes a systematic analysis of the effects of confinement inside a “state-of-the-art” supermax prison that housed prisoners who had committed serious disciplinary infractions or were suspected of prison gang activity.⁶ Haney’s use of a random (and therefore representative) sample of prisoners in supermax confinement allowed him to establish prevalence rates (i.e., an estimate of how widespread the psychological reactions were among the group of persons confined in supermax). This study found extraordinarily high rates of symptoms of psychological trauma. More than four out of five of those evaluated suffered from feelings of anxiety and nervousness, headaches, troubled sleep, and

⁵ See, for example: Haney, C., Banks, C., and Zimbardo, P., Interpersonal dynamics in a simulated prison. International Journal of Criminology and Penology, 1, 69-97 (1973); and Haney, C., Reforming Punishment: Psychological Limits to the Pains of Imprisonment. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Books (2006).

⁶ Described in detail in Haney, Mental Health Issues in Long-Term Solitary and “Supermax” Confinement, supra note 2.

lethargy or chronic tiredness, and over half complained of nightmares, heart palpitations, and fear of impending nervous breakdowns. Equally high numbers reported specific psychopathological effects of social isolation obsessive ruminations, confused thought processes, an oversensitivity to stimuli, irrational anger, and social withdrawal. Well over half reported violent fantasies, emotional flatness, mood swings, chronic depression, and feelings of overall deterioration, while nearly half suffered from hallucinations and perceptual distortions, and a quarter experienced suicidal ideation.

Dr. Grassian did pioneering work on the harmful psychological effects of solitary confinement and is responsible for drawing heightened attention to its harmful consequences in the early 1980s. In his initial article on the topic, Dr. Grassian reported on 15 prisoners kept in isolation for varying amounts of time at a Massachusetts prison.⁷ Dr. Grassian described a particular psychiatric syndrome resulting from the deprivation of social, perceptual, and occupational stimulation in solitary confinement. This syndrome has basically the features of a delirium, and among the more vulnerable population, can result in an acute agitated psychosis, and random violence – often directed towards the self, and at times resulting in suicide. He has also demonstrated in numerous cases that the prisoners who end up in solitary confinement are generally not, as claimed, “the worst of the worse”; they are, instead, the sickest, most emotionally labile, impulse-ridden and psychiatrically vulnerable among the prison population.

Two-thirds of the prisoners Dr. Grassian initially studied had become hypersensitive to external stimuli (noises, smells, etc.) and about the same

⁷ Stuart Grassian, Psychopathological Effects of Solitary Confinement, 140 American Journal of Psychiatry 1450-1454 (1983). See also, Stuart Grassian and Friedman, N., Effects of Sensory Deprivation in Psychiatric Seclusion and Solitary Confinement, 8 International Journal of Law and Psychiatry 49-65 (1986).

number experienced “massive free floating anxiety.” About half of the prisoners suffered from perceptual disturbances that for some included hallucinations and perceptual illusions, and another half complained of cognitive difficulties such as confusional states, difficulty concentrating, and memory lapses. About a third also described thought disturbances such as paranoia, aggressive fantasies, and impulse control problems. Three out of the fifteen had cut themselves in suicide attempts while in isolation. In almost all instances the prisoners had not previously experienced any of these psychiatric reactions.

Dr. Terry Kupers has been studying the plight of mentally ill prisoners for decades.⁸ In part because of the high prevalence of serious mental illness he discovered in many of the supermax facilities that he toured, he has written extensively about the harm that long-term isolated confinement causes in prisoners, especially those suffering from serious psychiatric conditions. As one stunning index of the magnitude of this harm, national data indicate that fully half of the suicides that occur in a prison system occur among the 4% to 8% of the prisoners who are consigned to segregation or isolation. Recently, he served as an expert witness, and then as a court-approved monitor, in litigation in Mississippi that required the Department of Corrections (Mississippi DOC) to ameliorate substandard conditions at the super-maximum Unit 32 of Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman, remove prisoners with serious mental illness (SMI) from administrative segregation and provide them with adequate treatment, and re-examine the entire classification system. Pursuant to two federal consent decrees, the MDOC greatly reduced the population in administrative segregation and established a step-down mental health

⁸ For example, see: T. Kupers, Prison Madness: The Mental Health Crisis Behind Bars and What We Must Do About It. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (1999).

treatment unit for the prisoners excluded from administrative segregation. After 800 of the approximately 1,000 prisoners in the super-maximum security unit were transferred out of isolated confinement, there was a large reduction in the rates of misconduct and violence, not only among the prisoners transferred out of supermax, but in the entire Mississippi Department of Corrections.⁹

Supermax prisons and the long-term solitary confinement to which they are dedicated represent an unjustified return to a long-discredited 19th century penal practice, one seized upon at a time of dangerous and unprecedented overcrowding that overwhelmed correctional systems across the country in the 1980s and 1990s. Rather than a “best practices” approach to the impending crisis that overcrowding threatened to bring about, correctional administrators turned to supermax isolated confinement because they perceived themselves to have few alternatives. However, in addition to the substantial psychological risks that they create for prisoners, the promise of supermax—as a last ditch, “stop gap” measure designed to contain the “worst of the worst”—has always exceeded their actual accomplishments.

Thus, as we have noted, long-term solitary confinement places prisoners at grave risk of psychological harm without reliably producing any tangible benefits in return. There is no hard evidence that supermaximum security facilities actually ever reliably reduced system-wide prison violence or enhanced public safety. Fears that a significant reduction in the supermax population or the outright closure of a facility will result in heightened security threats and prison violence have not been born out by experience. In fact, as the example cited above makes clear, recent experience in Mississippi found exactly the opposite—that a drastic reduction in the supermax population was followed by a reduction in prison misconduct and violence.

⁹ See T. Kupers, T. Dronet et al, Beyond Supermax Administrative Segregation: Mississippi’s Experience Rethinking Prison Classification and Creating Alternative Mental Health Programs, 36 Criminal Justice and Behavior 1037-1050, October, 2009, attached.

As prison populations slowly decline, and the nation's correctional system re-dedicating itself to program-oriented approaches to positive prisoner change, the resources expended on long-term solitary confinement should be redirected to more cost-effective solutions. In Mississippi and elsewhere, supermax prisons are beginning to be seen as an expensive anachronism. We agree with the Governor that it is an anachronism that Illinois should do without.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Stuart Grassian, M.D.
Clinical Faculty, Harvard Medical School, 1974 through 2002

Craig Haney, Ph.D., J.D.
Professor of Psychology, University of California, Santa Cruz

Terry A. Kupers, M.D., M.S.P.
Institute Professor, The Wright Institute

Contact: Terry Kupers, M.D., M.S.P.
8 Wildwood Avenue
Oakland, California 94610
510-654-8333
<kupers@igc.org>



John Howard Association of Illinois

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John Howard Association Supports the Proposed Closure of Tamms

Across the country, states are using the current economic crisis as an opportunity to pursue cost-effective criminal justice reform. In this spirit, Governor Pat Quinn has proposed closing eight facilities in the Illinois Department of Corrections (DOC), including Tamms Correctional Center (Tamms). As the only independent group that regularly monitors Illinois' prisons, the John Howard Association (JHA) supports the Governor's decision and DOC Director Godinez's corresponding recommendations for Tamms' closure.

It costs Illinois' taxpayers more than \$26 million a year to hold roughly 180 maximum-security and 180 minimum-security inmates at Tamms. Per inmate, this translates into almost \$65,000 per year—the highest cost of any DOC facility. As DOC has been asked to cut more than \$110 million from its fiscal year 2013 budget, an almost 10 percent reduction, it is difficult to justify spending such excessive resources to confine such a small population.

What is important about Tamms is not the prison itself or its practice of solitary confinement. It is DOC's ability to prevent especially dangerous and disruptive inmates from causing harm. Over the past two years, JHA has visited more than 20 DOC facilities, including two trips to Tamms and multiple visits to the state's maximum-security prisons. We found that all segregation inmates in DOC, whether at Tamms, Menard, Stateville, or Pontiac Correctional Centers, are treated virtually the same. They spend 22 to 23 hours a day in their cells, with their movement severely limited and aggressively monitored by correctional officers. The main difference between Tamms and other maximum security facilities is that Tamms' inmates are permitted almost no human contact and the cost of their incarceration is more than double of what it would be at comparable facilities.

That is why JHA is confident in Director Godinez's statement that Tamms inmates can be safely absorbed and managed by other facilities, particularly given the fact that JHA documented on a recent visit that nearly a quarter of Tamms' maximum-security inmates are now over 50 years old—an age that statistically reduces offenders' risk of causing serious violence or harm.

If Tamms remains open, the facility's high costs are likely to increase, as Illinois will need to devote even more resources to shield it from litigation. While there have been some efforts at reform, most notably the 2009 Ten-Point Plan, they have failed to ward off ongoing challenges to Tamms' constitutionality. This is a compounded

problem because DOC's limited resources are shrinking and desperately needed at other facilities.

With the exception of Tamms, every facility JHA has visited in recent years suffers from chronic understaffing. This is true particularly at medium and minimum-security institutions that house low-level offenders who need medical and mental health services and educational programming to facilitate their safe reentry into the community. For instance, while Tamms employs approximately 15 nurses and one part-time psychiatrist to care for fewer than 400 inmates, Vienna Correctional Center, a male minimum-security prison, has only 10 nurses and one-part-time psychiatrist to care for a population of more than 1,600. Similarly, whereas Tamms has two full-time GED teachers and no waiting lists for the program, Lincoln Correctional Center, a female medium security facility of about 1000 inmates, had only one GED teacher and prohibitively long waiting lists. The closure plan, as outlined by Director Godinez, will help alleviate this problem by reassigning Tamms' staff to other facilities where their assistance is badly needed.

While the proposal to close Tamms is supported by strong fiscal arguments, the Governor's decision is not just about cutting costs. Since Tamms opened in 1998, a growing body of research and the experiences of prison systems in other states like Mississippi and Colorado have shown that the practice of long term isolation is not only psychologically damaging, but ultimately unnecessary to protect the safety of inmates and staff. By closing Tamms and directing its staff to fill vacancies in other facilities, Illinois will take a critical step down the road to reforming the state's prison system to the benefit of the public's safety, security, and economic well-being.



Advancing the human and civil rights of people with disabilities

SELF-ADVOCACY ASSISTANCE ★ LEGAL SERVICES ★ DISABILITY RIGHTS EDUCATION ★ PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY ★ ABUSE INVESTIGATIONS

Equip for Equality Testimony
Before the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability
Proposed Closure of Tamms Correctional Center
Ullin, Illinois
April 2, 2012

Equip for Equality, the independent, not-for-profit organization designated by the Governor in 1985 to administer the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy system for people with disabilities in Illinois, appreciates the opportunity to testify before the Commission regarding the proposed closure of Tamms Correctional Center (“Tamms”). Equip for Equality’s mission is to advance the civil and human rights of people with disabilities in Illinois. This is accomplished through self-advocacy training and technical assistance, legal services, public policy initiatives, and investigations of abuse and neglect in all settings that serve people with disabilities.

Equip for Equality has long been concerned about the treatment of the individuals at Tamms, particularly those with mental illness. Closure of Tamms will, we hope, put an end to such treatment. The findings of numerous local and national groups, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the Midwest Coalition for Human Rights, have been critical of the conditions at Tamms and called for its closure.

Prisoners with cognitive, intellectual, and psychiatric disabilities experience severe adverse effects when forced to live for prolonged periods in extreme isolation in supermax prisons, disciplinary segregation units and other types of solitary confinement. Many individuals living at Tamms have severe mental illness. It has been documented repeatedly that sensory deprivation, as routinely occurs at Tamms, exacerbates the symptoms of mental illness. Making the situation even worse, individuals living at Tamms receive little to no mental health treatment while they are housed there, and many indeed become more ill.

Many of the persons at Tamms have been sent there, not due to convictions for heinous crimes, but due to conduct in other prison settings. These behaviors are often themselves related to untreated mental illness. The sensory and social isolation of Tamm’s incarceration worsens, not improves, mental illness.

Further, Tamms has been shown to be extremely costly. The inmate population at Tamms totals 375, including 189 minimum security inmates, which amounts to less than 1% of the prison population. But, the total cost to the state is \$35 million. In FY 2011, the per capita cost per inmate at Tamms was \$64,805 while the average cost of inmates not at Tamms was \$21,405. This number grows to close to \$90,000 per inmate at Tamms when the minimum security inmates are not considered.

This is a shocking number for the state to be spending in essentially counterproductive incarceration. Most, if not all, experts believe that the conditions imposed at Tamms fall short of achieving their goals.

THE INDEPENDENT, FEDERALLY MANDATED PROTECTION & ADVOCACY SYSTEM FOR THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

DUANE C. QUAINI, BOARD CHAIRPERSON ZENA NAIDITCH, PRESIDENT & CEO

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Many other states have closed or drastically shrunk their supermax prisons. Illinois should do the same and explore more humane ways to treat its prisoners, especially those with mental illness.

We support the closure of Tamms, because it is the right thing to do. In the current fiscal crisis, the savings realized from closure is a needed bonus. We are hopeful that as the alternatives to incarceration at Tamms are explored, serious consideration will be given to the mental health needs of prisoners transitioning out of Tamms, as well as others in the system. Equip for Equality stands ready to assist in that effort.

Thank you very much.

To Whom It May Concern,

Tamms Correctional Center is a dismal place that was meant for short term incarceration, as the type of treatment the prisoners receive could only be endured for a short period of time. Due to the lack of jobs in the southern region, these men were sacrificed. Human suffering is not the answer for jobs. The prisoners are forced to look at gray walls, sleep on concrete beds, and are in their cells 23 hours a day. The IDOC is slowly murdering these men, what type of message are they sending? The men are not offered educational, religion, work, exercise or rehabilitation. This facility functions more as a mental institution than a prison of rehabilitation and it serves no purpose other than to warehouse prisoners.

The state is housing these men at a cost of \$90,000 per year per inmate and I feel this is an outrageous cost for taxpayers. This is far beyond the cost of other prisons and is draining tax-payers money, money that the state could use for human service organizations, etc.

I am a mother; my son was in Tamms from 2002 until recently. The toll it took on our family is indescribable. I am the only family in the state and live by the Wisconsin border. The trip took approximately 6 ½ hours, I would need to pay for a hotel room for the night, visit for 4 hours the next day, and then drive back home arriving late at night. It was not only the time spent driving to Tamms, the time I had to take off work, and the expense that was a hardship. Seeing him behind glass where he was handcuffed and sat on a concrete stool for four hours at a time was heartbreaking. My son has 2 daughters that were only able to visit once a year (as they live out of state) while they came to visit me. It was heartbreaking for them to see their father, who they love dearly, handcuffed behind glass when he could have been in a regular prison where they could have hugged each other and feel like they are actually with him. It's incredibly hard for a child to see their father in a place like Tamms. They would cry when we left and I wouldn't have the word to console them. The facility itself is designed for sensory deprivation; no one should have to know that their father, son, or brother is in a place like that.

Please close Tamms; save the tax payers money to be used on other important programs; and show Illinois that we are all interested in placing these men in regular prisons where they can get an education and be rehabilitated so they can contribute to society when they are released.



P.O. Box 98 - Olmsted, Illinois 62970

BRUCE R. MOSBY
President / Chief Executive Officer
Member - Board of Directors

March 26, 2012

State of Illinois
Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability
703 Stratton Office Building
Springfield, IL 62706

RE: Tamms Correctional Facility Proposed Closure

Attn: Commission Office

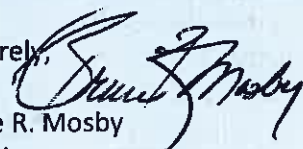
To Whom It May Concern,

As President of a bank in Southern Illinois, I realize the impact a decision to close the Tamms Correctional Center would have on families, communities, and the local economy. News of jobs being lost daily whether in the private sector or government has the same affect. They disrupt and cause further damage to a population and economy that already struggles to meet median levels in terms of employment, per capita income, educational opportunities, etc. This decision would further decimate a part of this state that is often disregarded.

According to www.finance-data.com and information provided by the US Dept. of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics, I would like to submit some unemployment information that is frightening for the future of our area. I have researched employment information on Alexander, Pulaski and Union Counties in Illinois. These three counties encompass the communities near the Tamms sit. In January 1996, we averaged 10.43%; January 2001 was 8.2%; January 2006 was 8.63%; and January 2011 was 11.13%. Notice the January 1996 was immediately prior to the prison opening. I think these statistics are informative and indicate what we have awaiting if closure occurs.

Closure of Tamms Correctional Center would further harm the economic climate of our area. The implication of damage would be more than loss of prison jobs. Local businesses, schools, churches, civic organizations, and local government would suffer tremendously through lost income, reduced revenues and sales taxes, and people relocating for employment reasons.

I strongly urge consideration be given to overturn the proposal to close Tamms Correctional Center. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bruce R. Mosby
President

Locations at:

Olmsted
618-742-6205
800-624-BANK
618-742-6457

Toll-Free
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To the members of the COGFA Committee,

I am writing this in response to your hearing held at Shawnee Community College on the Tamms Correctional Center. I am always shocked and amazed when people who should know their job and every aspect of their job get up to speak, open their mouths and fall all over themselves with fictional statistics, facts and figures.

The truth is that when people say that a Cmax Prison doesn't work or is cruel and inhumane treatment, it usually comes from those who haven't even been to see it or seen first hand how it works/operates. When in fact, nothing could be further from the truth, witnesses, who gave testimony at this hearing throwing out stats about recidivism rates at 60% or higher and that a Cmax damages lives and such. In fact, out of the 203 inmates released from Tamms and sent back to other facilities to serve out their sentence, only approximately 7.59% have had to be returned for being disruptive and/or committing further violent acts at another prison which they had transferred out to. And as for it being a damaging place to anyone who is placed there for any length of time, I would point out that two (2) of the witnesses who came forward to testify at the hearing, Mr. Nelson and Mr. Cannon, are former CMAX inmates, and both now seem to be prospering since their release from Tamms and seem to be productive members of the real world and society. Inmates that are housed at Tamms earn their way into the institution and have to earn their way back out to another facility by good behavior and following the rules.

The inmates housed at Tamms are placed there only after committing acts of violence, against other inmates as well as staff, Gang activity or other institutionally disruptive behaviors inside of the prison system here in Illinois; they just are not picked out of the crowd and sent there just because.

It makes absolutely no sense whatsoever, to close this place down and send inmates out of state using the interstate compact, and paying other states to house our inmates when we have a place for them and returning other inmates to facilities which are not equipped to deal with these inmates. We should be using the tool that we have since we have no other deterrents, i.e. Death Penalty; to deter crime and criminal acts. The Governor may wish to go back to the "Old Days" since apparently he has a short memory and wants to be "SOFT ON CRIME", but the blood of workers and inmates who will pay the price will be on his hands!

Kirk Dutton, Metropolis, Illinois

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kirk Dutton", written over the typed name.

To those members of the Commission I would ask that you take a historical view of the Illinois Department of Corrections. The picture today is not of disruption, gang violence, property damage and loss of life, both inmate and staff. I began my career in the Department of Corrections in February 1977 at the Menard Correctional Center. I remember those days being filled with concern for personal safety and that of my co-workers. I experienced the disruption through several riots, cell house disturbances, property damage, inmate on inmate assault, staff assault, and personally being assaulted. I felt the agony of co-workers being killed while performing their jobs. I was fortunate to have transferred to another facility in 1991 and later to the Tamms Correctional Center in 1996 where I finished my career. I personally experienced the decline of violence, damage, and murder of staff with the opening of the Tamms Supermax facility. It is not some hideous 19th century place of lost souls. It is a well functioning deterrent to those that would consider perpetrating those acts of violence. Does it have a place in our society, unfortunately yes. If those of you question it's necessity, consider spending just one day with those incarcerated there in an open environment were you can walk beside them wondering is this the day. Please review the facts before closure.

--

Steve Ramsey, Health Training Specialist
American Heart Association TCC
Shawnee Community College
8364 Shawnee College Road
Ullin, IL. 62992

I would like to go on record opposing the closing of the Tamms Maximum Security Prison. Many jobs that are crucial to Southernmost Illinois are on the chopping block as well as the safety of our residents. This is a total no-brainer and should not be allowed to close. There are many other options that could be scrutinized for closure through the Illinois State government, but this is not one of them.

Monica Smith
58 Edgewood Park
Cairo, IL 62914

The IDOC is not equipped to absorb the aggressive inmates that Tamms houses. Distance from Chicago was done by design, to minimize moles and sympathizers to Chicago gangs.

Dax Christopher

Dr. Stephen F. Eisenman (Northwestern University)

I have already signed-up to testify, and will speak in detail about issue 2 (below) but would like to register a public comment:

I am in support of the plan to close Tamms for the following reasons:

1. The cost per prisoner is more than \$65,000 per year, higher than any but a few small juvenile facilities.
2. The prison does not augment safety. All major studies in Illinois and beyond indicate that there is no decrease in assaults upon other prisoners or guards as a result of the opening of a supermax.
3. The prison is a human rights catastrophe. Long-term solitary confinement causes a host of serious mental illnesses. When isolation is prolonged (some men at Tamms have been there for 14 years), it is a form of torture, according to the U.N. Special Rapporteur for Torture. For this reason supermax facilities, and Tamms in particular have been condemned by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the ACLU, the Midwest Coalition for Human Rights, The Eight Day Center for Justice, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, the Illinois Coalition Against Torture, and Tamms Year Ten.
4. The prison is 1/2 empty and will remain little used -- there is simply no need for a facility like this. Many other states have either closed completely, or drastically shrunk their supermax prisons.
5. The \$35 million dollar expenditure for Tamms can be better used for other state needs, especially for the needs of the poor.

Please reconsider closing Tamms! My husband has only been there 4 yrs & he is our main provider! .we have 2 children w/ rare immune difficiencies, so I can only work part time. Please rethink this. Our lives will be destroyed. We have specialists in St. Louis & cannot leave this area. We need Tamms. So. Il. Needs Tamms. Do not close. Many lives depend on it!

Thank you,

Nancy Cerney

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to you expressing my support to keep the Tamms Correctional Center open in Southern IL. The closing of the facility will most definitely hurt the employment in this community area. Opportunity for employment in the area is low enough so why make it worse?

We in the down state of Southern IL (past Carbondale) would like to prosper in our growth with new opportunities of businesses/industries/centers, etc. to create jobs whether than close a facility and increase the unemployment percentage. It doesn't make sense to build a facility and then close it and cost families their jobs. It seems millions of dollars are always spent in northern IL. Are we in Southern IL just as important? These people needs these jobs and Southern IL needs the employment.

I have family and very good friends who work at the Tamms Center who will be affected if the center is closed. It is my plead that you NOT close this facility.

Put the shoe on the other foot .. how would you feel if it were your job that was on the line?

Judith A. Wadley
5204 US Hwy 51

To the members of the Commission; I am against the proposed closure of Tamms Correctional Center. I ask you all to understand the importance of Tamms Correctional Center for two separate reasons:

1. Jobs in this area are very hard to come by during these tough economic times. Moving jobs away from this area is not the answer for a better economy. In reading the report Director Godinez wrote, 184 employees will have to relocate to a different region of the State to remain employed with the Department. These are just employees that are employed at Tamms. Let's not forget local businesses where family members of these employees work. They also will feel the effect of this closure. This is a tremendous amount of tax dollars that this area seriously needs. Also, explain how these families are to sell their homes to relocate to another region of the State. I don't believe selling a home in an area where jobs cease to exist will be an easy task.

2. More importantly, Tamms plays a vital role to the Departmenet of Corrections. The mission of Tamms Correctional Center was to improve the quality of life, safety and day-to-day operation of other Illinois Department of Corrections facilities, and to enhance the safety of staff, offenders and the public. In the years the C-max has existed, it has done this job! The bottom line is, let's not forget that it has worked. Do we want to take the risk of going back to a time when corrections officers went to work wondering if they would go back home unscathed? I think not. I've always been a believer in not letting

history repeat itself, and to learn from mistakes one makes. I hope you, the members of the Commission, feel the same way.

Kyle Massey
Corrections Officer
Tamms Correctional Center

I am writing to protest the closure of the Tamms Correctional Center. This facility is serving the purpose for which it was built to house the worst of the worse. It has had a positive impact on the other prisons in the State of Illinois. Tamms is located in one the most, if the not the most, economically depressed areas in the State of Illinois. Closing this facility would be disastrous for Alexander County and the other surrounding counties. There are other areas where the budget can be cut.

Kay Nistrath
Retired Office Associate
Tamms Correctional Center.

To Whom It May Concern

I whole heartedly support Governor Patrick Quinn's decision to close Tamms Supermax Prison. Tamms is known for its use of prolonged solitary confinement which serves to further destabilize an already mentally vulnerable population. The closure of this prison will serve as a symbol to the rest of the country that these inhumane chambers can and should become a thing of the past.

Sincerely,

Michael Gosch

Please shut down Tamms, one of the worst and most inhumane prisons. You can not justify its existence on any grounds, economic or human.

Yasmin Nair

To Whom It May Concern:

I support the governor's decision to close the Tamms supermax prison. The U.N. Committee Against Torture considers prisons like Tamms to be cruel, inhuman and degrading, and a form of torture. Illinois prisons should not violate international human rights standards. Tamms has caused enough suffering. Men are in isolation 24 hours per day for years, sometimes more than a decade. They receive at most an hour a day of solitary exercise in a small concrete pen. I believe this prison brings shame to the state of Illinois.

Sincerely,
Erin Moore

To Whom it May Concern:

As a Concerned Citizen, I hereby protest against the closure of the Tamms Correctional Facility. This facility has been in working order for many years. This facility has also provided several thousands of people with employment, and the means to provide for their families. Closing this facility would be direct devastation on the local community and for Southern Illinois. In my opinion, I see that there is no reason for this closure. Why change what has worked for so many years. Thank you.

JENNIFER PALMER
440 Mission Chapel Lane
Anna, IL 62906

I am a Lieutenant at Tamms, and my wife is an Officer at Tamms. The impact of this facility's closing on our family is obvious; however, I believe the economic impacts on the surrounding areas and on the entire State of Illinois are not as obvious. Tamms is located in a financially depressed area already plagued by soaring unemployment rates. The dollars spent by Tamms employees at local businesses are largely responsible for keeping those businesses in operation. Innumerable analyses can be done to illustrate the economic impact this closure will have. No statistics, however, will show the effect on the small business owner who knows that the sale of his/her product and the continued viability of his/her business venture probably would not be possible without the financial impetus provided by the Tamms facility. Business men and women support the Tamms facility. Jobs at Tamms and other local jobs not only promote the local economy but also enhance the revenue of the State of Illinois with sales and income taxes. The loss of jobs at Tamms will adversely affect unemployment percentages and require more people to apply for benefits from public assistance programs which drain the state coffers.

The knowledge that Tamms is the destination of the "worst of the worst" has always been evident. Since the announcement of the possible closure of the Tamms facility, however, staff members at other

state institutions have a heightened awareness of the potential consequences. The level of inmate housed at Tamms is at the top of the food chain in the prison world. As soon as Tamms opened, its impact on the rest of the system was felt immediately. Over the past 15 years, it has done exactly what it was designed to do. Since the inception of Tamms, the total number of prison staff killed in the line of duty is ZERO! The death penalty was abolished in Illinois effective July 1, 2011. What will be a deterrent to potentially lethal inmate conduct if the State of Illinois has no death penalty and if there is no Tamms facility to house the most violent abusers? Tamms accommodates those deemed unsafe to be confined in the general prison populations. Closing this facility will undo what so many have worked for and cause the staff deaths of those before it opened to be in vain. Job loss and economic impact weigh heavily not only on the minds of those who work at Tamms but also on the minds of those business persons who benefit indirectly from Tamms. The possible catastrophic effect of putting countless lives at risk if Tamms inmates are transferred to other institutions, however, should weigh even more on the minds of those who deliberate this decision.

Please review the mission statement of Tamms. I believe we honor its principles each day as we strive to protect the safety of all Illinois citizens.

The mission of the Tamms Closed Maximum (C-Max) Security is to improve the quality of life, safety and day-to-day operation of other Illinois Department of Corrections facilities and to enhance the safety of staff, offenders and the public.

Tamms C-Max has been designated and designed to house the Illinois Department of Corrections most disruptive, violent and problematic offenders. Offenders approved for placement at the Tamms C-Max have demonstrated an inability or unwillingness to conform to the requirements of a general population facility.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion on record.

Lieutenant David Teske, Tamms Correctional Center

Our loved one has experienced extreme psychological duress and long term/life-long impairment due to years of isolation and other dehumanizing treatment in Tamms and IDOC in general.

Isolation drives normal-minded men mad and makes men with mental illness worse.

Eliminate long term segregation and isolation in IDOC. There are alternatives!

Lori Davis-Hood/wife

Rolanda Aden-Hussey/sister

Gentlemen:

Although I am not an Illinois resident, I feel that I must speak out concerning the proposed closure of Tamms Correctional Center. I have several concerns regarding this matter.

It goes without saying that the closure of this facility will significantly impact the immediate area in the loss of jobs and loss of revenue to local businesses, as well as the loss of tax revenue. These are concerns which I realize always manifest themselves whenever a change of this nature is considered.

However, as a veteran Correctional Officer, the issues I am much more concerned with have the potential for serious security issues throughout the Illinois system.

First of all, Tamms Correctional Center was created as a Level 6, institution, designed to house the "worst of the worst", if you will. It is a state of the art facility, and I have personally observed the professionalism and the sense of security that is ingrained into the professionals who work there.

These men and women are abundantly aware of the potential for violence that exists in a maximum security unit and, as a result, are required to function at a much higher level of vigilance. Their offenders are at Tamms because they have already proven that they can't function in a less restrictive environment- they not only have a problem with following the rules in a free society, but they are also unable or unwilling to following the rules in the environment that has caused them to be separated from a free society. Therefore, they were transferred to a facility that has not only the trained Correctional staff, but also the physical plant designed to maintain the highest level of security. This creates a safer environment for staff as well as the offenders themselves, and keeps society safer because of the security measures required to keep the offenders incarcerated.

I was a Correctional Officer with the Missouri Department of Corrections from 1981 until the year 2000. For nearly three years I worked in a "Supermax" unit at Missouri State Penitentiary. During that time I was able to see firsthand the caliber of staff who must work in this environment constantly. The individuals assigned to live in that unit had been separated from the general population because they couldn't function there.

The possibility for escape attempts, major disturbances, assaults on both staff and inmates was greatly reduced due to this maximum security unit being built.

I am genuinely concerned that, with Tamms Correctional Center being closed and the inmates currently assigned to that facility dispersed throughout the state to institutions that are already at near capacity, the danger to society in general and staff in particular is severely magnified.

Correctional staff are arguably the least appreciated members of the Criminal Justice team. These men and women walk the toughest beat on earth, and I am proud to have spent so much of my adult life as a part of it. I now work as a representative for the only national charity dedicated to caring for

Correctional staff during their time of need. Every year, we gather to honor those who have lost their lives in the line of duty, and to show their families that they're not alone. We have honored several Illinoisans over the years. I have been to the ICEMA memorial service for the last several years, and it's sobering to think of the families that have lost their loved ones.

In closing, I encourage those in a decision-making position to keep Tamms Correctional Center open.

Sincerely,

Ellis R. Peoples, Captain (ret)
Missouri Department of Corrections

CLOSE IT DOWN

I am a mother of an inmate in Tamms, and I plead with the Governor to close the facility. In 2002, my son was sent there because of a ticket, he appealed the ticket and according to the Administrative Review Board the (DOC) was to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Feb 11, 2002 ticket was expunged and he be return back to general population with all privileges. As an effort to keep their jobs and Tamms full, they failed and ignored their lawful responsibilities to consider all exonerating evidence and follow their own rules and regulations. You can review all documents on his FB page. Please please please close this facility.

Seriously

Annette Franklin

I have been a friend and penpal of a prisoner at Tamms for nearly four years. He has been inside of Tamms for far longer than that, and wrote to me in a state of desperation seeking friendship and support. Not a month goes by that something unjust, abusive, or troubling fails to happen to him behind those walls. He has been racially harassed, had his food stepped in, had his personal belongings stolen, been accused of false disciplinary infractions, been strip-searched and called racial and religious slurs as a simple matter of course. These events are so frequent and persistent they can scarcely all be documented, especially when you consider the systemic effort on the part of Tamms employees to prevent these stories from escaping the walls of the facility.

My friend, who is quite mentally sound despite being in the custody of the state of Illinois since he was 17 (he is now nearly 40), may still lose his sanity as a result of the torture of incarceration at Tamms.

This is a man who committed a crime when he was sixteen and has long since lost access to outside support. Tamms employees have blocked and intercepted his mail due to its political content, and harassed him for having a white friend on the outside (he is a black Muslim, I am white and a member of the LGBTQ community). Most recently the violations at Tamms involved harassment and retaliation over my friend's attempts to access legal support.

I have visited Tamms twice, and I feel assuredly that the conditions at Tamms are a form of torture. I am begging you to please close this facility, certainly for budget reasons but more importantly because it is the only morally acceptable thing to do. My friend's story is the story of everyone at Tamms: unjust torture that simply cannot be justified by any argument whatsoever, jobs or justice. Please, please close this facility down.

Lewis Wallace

Most of the people who are protesting the closing of Tamms are being paid to do so. Yes, it's their job. That is because there is a lot of money funneled into Tamms, more than most prisons. Though there is no money coming out of Tamms. It is a hell hole where money is thrown at a problem and the people inside suffer. I am of the mind that the state of Illinois can still employ these people, but in an actually sustainable manner. In regards to social justice work, there is work to be done in supporting community schools, healthcare centers and local social justice organizations. I do not want my money or my vote supporting the work that prison guards do even if they are backed by one of the largest labor unions in the United States. What is happening inside this prison is atrocious. The sooner we close it down, the sooner the people who are working as prison guards can start to heal. Nobody is benefiting from this situation.

Thank you,
Jake Klippenstein

The Tamms facility follows procedure that is shown to have a deleterious effect on the mental and psychological well-being of its inmates. Long-term seclusion and isolation all but ensure that Tamms inmates have no viable chance of rehabilitation or health. Regardless of the acts committed by individuals housed in Tamms, inmates human rights are being ignored. Only the closure of this facility can end this treatment. I support the closure of Tamms and of all SHUs.

Elizabeth Dadabo

To whom it may concern,

I will skip telling you about how much closing Tamms Correctional Center will affect my family (single mother supporting my child alone) and our community here in Southern Illinois (which is always forgotten by the state of Chicago, I mean city) and try to appeal to the families of these offenders housed at Tamms Correctional Center. Many of the offenders that have already been transferred are seeing that they won't get the same quality (or any at all) of medical, mental, educational, etc services at other facilities. And don't forget when they are housed at Tamms they are safe from other offenders. They can't be raped or murdered by their cellmates. They are going to make already crowded prisons even more unsafe for staff and offenders. I am opposed to this closing for many reasons.

Carrie Pickel
Correctional officer

To whom it may concern:

I am a concerned Illinois citizen writing to advocate for the closure of Tamms Prison. I know it is being discussed and debated and testimony is being heard and I would like to add my voice to the discussion.

The tactics of Tamms are ineffective and inhumane and it presents an undue burden on all parties, most specifically the prisoners, and after that the taxpayers.

Thanks for your time and I hope you all will do the right thing and close down Tamms.

Thanks,
Latham Zearfoss
Chicago, IL

I am writing this letter opposing the closing of Tamms Correctional Center. I have worked at Tamms for 14 years. The closing of Tamms and Dwight C.C. makes no sense in a already overcrowded prison system. Tamms is there for a reason, it houses the worst in the state. I know this from personal experience. I was assaulted by a inmate that is housed at Tamms. Just because i was the next guard that walked by his cell door. This institution should remain open. young men and women starting families depend on this job for their livelihood. Businesses in Alexander, Union, Pulaski counties will be devastated in the closing of Tamms Correctional Center. Whats next on the list when corrections officers, nurses, counselors start getting assaulted, raped, maybe even murdered? thank you William Caldwell

03/29/2012

CO GFA

To Whom It May Concern:

I, Jack Guetterman, owner of Guetterman Motors Inc. located in Cairo, Alexander Co., Il wishes to express my concern of the announced closing of Tamms Correctional Center.

If this facility is closed, the effect on Guetterman Motors would be a loss of revenue though the loss of auto sales as well as service business. This could cause the layoff of at least one service tech and I'm sure other businesses in the area would suffer.

Also, from a standpoint of being one of the newest prison facilities in Illinois, I have a hard time understanding that a modern facility is not more cost effective to operate compared to the long list of outdated prisons in the state. It seems to me that Tamms is environmental friendly as well as energy efficient. Why was Tamms put on the HIT list?

In closing, this prison should be a show case for the state. We in Southern Illinois are proud to have Tamms CC as part of the community. Please, reconsider closing this prison, if you must close a prison, close one of the outdated prisons.

Sincerely

Jack Guetterman

Guetterman Motors Inc
2210 Sycamore St
Cairo, Il 62914

Tamms Correctional Center needs to remain open for the safety of staff and inmates in other prisons. Tamms Correctional Center was created for a reason to prevent death and injury of staff and inmates and it works. Closing Tamms CC will be a liability for the State for the reasons of any injury or death to staff or inmate due to the closure of Tamms CC would have been prevented therefore opening the door for lawsuits from the affected families costing the State even more money than it would save. The inmates at Tamms CC are there because they earned their placement. Tamms saves lives!

Thomas McCall

Thursday, March 29, 2012

Below, is a written statement to be filed regarding my opposition to the closing of Tamms Correctional Center.

As a life-long resident of Southern IL, I am well aware that I don't matter to the Illinois government. However, my husband and I are against the proposed closure of Tamms Correctional Center. My husband, who currently serves as a correctional officer, has been employed at Tamms for just over two years. We are not strangers to the IDOC. Both of our fathers have retired from corrections, as well as an uncle. We recently got married and are now expecting our first child this October. While my husband is our primary provider, I work two jobs to help support our growing family. To us, the closure of Tamms would be devastating. Economically, Southern IL will as well be devastated by this closure.

To those in favor/proponents of the closure: You're fighting to close Tamms because it's "inhumane;" because of the "psychological harm" the inmates endure. You say Tamms promotes "human suffering." But I have to ask all of those in favor of the closure - Who gives justice to the victims that the inmates at Tamms tortured, raped, murdered, etc? Who provides justice for those correctional employees who were assaulted and/or killed by inmates? How can you close a facility, because you say it's inhumane; and fight for the rights of convicted felons. Yet you neglect entirely justice for their victims?

Lindsey Sadler
Jonesboro, IL.

To Whom it May Concern:

There are a lot of comments about Tamms Closed-Maximum Security Prison being inhumane. There doesn't seem to be any concern for the victims that were murdered or their families that had to live life without them. Seems to be a lot of educators "Dr.'s of Art" that think they are well versed on human rights. If that were so they would have also considered the victim's families. Seems to be a lot of "mamas" that think their kids have to sleep on concrete beds. That is by far not true seeing how they all have a very thick brand new mattress, television, radio, air conditioning, and a recreation yard. However, it beats the coffin that their victims lay in.

I bet the mother of Correctional Officer Lawrence "Frank" Kush wishes she could call her son, see him on the holidays, visit with him occasionally and share birthdays. That will not happen because on July 02, 1998 Officer Kush died at 8:20pm from head injuries sustained during an attack near the vocational school at 3:00pm on July 01, 1998. Kush, 24, of South Chicago Heights,, started corrections on May 01, 1987. Inmate William Cabrera, who was serving 60 years for murder, burglary, attempted burglary, and David Starks, who was serving 12 years for attempted murder, armed robbery and aggravated battery were found guilty of the senseless premeditated gang murder and received life sentences. Nearly 500 department staff, and representatives from the Cook County DOC, Indiana DOC, Chicago Police Department and Illinois State Police attended Kush's funeral. He was survived by his wife and two daughters.

Do these inmates really deserve to leave Tamms? Where are the departments that represented Officer Kush then? Is it that easy to forget?

Director Michael P. Lane once said of an employee being murdered, "This sad occasion, once again, brings home the sad reality that the nature of our business is dangerous."

There is a reason that there have been no staff murders in the Department of Corrections since the inception of the Supermax prison in 1998, irregardless of what the Dr. of Art at Northwestern says. He has never done a day walking the galleries or attending the staff funerals. I guess sometimes it is easier to "paint" a picture the way you want it. Easy on the canvas.

-C. Spaulding

To Whom it may Concern:

All of the actual tax paying residents of the state of Illinois are aware of the financial crisis the state is in. However, Governor Quinns proposal to close Tamms C.C. is not going to solve the states budget problem. If anything, it is going to make it much worse.

Tamms Correctional Center was built for a reason. Our legislators were aware of the cost from the start. They knew something had to be done to gain control of the prisons. Before Tamms, the prison system was overrun with gangs, drugs, and violence. The opening of Tamms allowed the state to regain control. Tamms serves it's purpose. Can the state of Illinois afford another Richard Speck incident? Haven't we been embarrassed enough?

Family members of inmates housed at Tamms complain of the long trip from Chicago to Tamms to visit an inmate. I bet the family member of the victim of that inmate wishes they could travel 6 hrs to see their loved one again. Unfortunately they can't. Inmates are not housed at Tamms for being "Role model Inmates".

The Human Rights Activists would love nothing more than the closure of Tamms. They believe that Tamms inmates are kept in Solitary Confinement. Solitary Confinement is defined as : COMPLETE AND TOTAL ISOLATION. Not a single Tamms inmate is being held in solitary confinement. Tamms inmates go to yard, play chess, talk to one another, see a nurse a minimum of 3 times a day and, an officer every 30 minutes around the clock. Before passing judgement on Tamms, come visit it. See for yourself that it is a well run safe facility.

The prison population is increasing each year. Closing prisons is only going to create overcrowding and violence. Cook County Jail is overcrowded and housing numerous inmates awaiting placement into the states prison system. Is the State of Illinois really willing to take that risk? KEEP TAMMS OPEN

Steve Pendleton

Friday March 30, 2012

Commission On Government Forecasting and Accountability
Attn: Facility Closure
703 Stratton Bldg.
Springfield, IL 62706

Co-Chairs Senator Schoenberg and Representative Bellock,

I write to you today as an opponent of the closing of the Department of Corrections facility in Tamms. In my position as Treasurer of Pulaski county, I am concerned about the effect this closure will have on the economy of the county I represent. The total annual payroll of IDOC-Tamms employees that live and pay taxes in Pulaski county is in excess of \$1,000,000.00. This represents taxpayers to the school districts, community college, municipalities, road districts, public health, cooperative extension services, fire and police protection, county, and other taxing bodies that would be devastated if this facility were to close and these employees had to move to find employment. There is no major industry in this already economically depressed area of Illinois for the displaced workers that IDOC could not absorb into other facilities. The most likely scenario would be families moving and selling their homes, if possible, far below market value which would result in fewer tax dollars collected and distributed to each taxing district. There would be the additional loss of state and federal dollars to the area school districts due to children of these employees moving, lowering enrollment which these state and federal reimbursement monies are based upon. Sales tax would also decrease due to the loss of a significant portion of our already small population leaving and buying goods and paying for services elsewhere. There are many other areas I could touch on that would be hurt financially, but I believe you have an understanding of the economic impact this proposed closure would cause on this area of Illinois that has even been recognized by the federal government, just a few short years ago, as one of the most economically depressed areas in the entire country by being designated a Federal Empowerment Zone.

In addition to the many economic reasons for keeping IDOC Tamms facility open, the most important reason for keeping this facility open is to serve the purpose it was created to serve. I believe if you look at the reasoning behind opening Tamms, you will find it is serving its intended purpose. As much as human rights advocacy groups claim Tamms is cruel and unusual, the crimes the inmates that earn their way to Tamms commit are the true definition of cruelty. The State of Illinois has standards that are met by this correctional facility and that is not the issue here. If these inmates were moved to another facility, both staff and other inmates' lives would be in jeopardy. As stated previously, I believe the number of such incidents has dramatically decreased since Tamms opened.

Finally, I ask each of you to ask yourselves if Tamms were to close and the inmates from Tamms were transferred to a Corrections facility in your district, what do you think your constituency would think if one of their family members employed by IDOC were assaulted by one of the inmates from Tamms?

There is a reason for Tamms! There is a reason the inmates housed at Tamms are there! Please don't forget why Tamms was deemed necessary. It is still necessary! There are other budget cuts that can be made that would not effect public safety or the lives of so many. The State of Illinois is in a budget crisis, but proposed new spending is more than double the savings closing this facility would save. How much is the life of a Department of Corrections facility worth? That is the question asked when Tamms was opened. I pray you ask yourselves the same question today.

Thank you for your time, your attention, and your service to the State of Illinois.

Truly yours,

Robert L. Moore
Pulaski County Treasurer
Pulaski County Courthouse
500 Illinois Avenue
Mound City, IL 62963

I am against the closure of tamms prison. The inmates at tamms have earned the right to be at tamms by harming or killing other inmates or staff while at other facilities. other inmates are housed at tamms because of their high ranking status in dangerous street gangs. Tamms was opened to stop such violent crime by design and high levels of security measures. If tamms is allowed to be closed and these inmates are moved back to open population facilities they will harm or worse yet kill staff and other inmates. One thing that hasn't been mentioned is what about the victims of violent crime or their families rights. I want those people to know that as long as the monsters that caused you such great lose are housed at tamms they can never harm another innocent person. I have been in corrections for over 15 years and im proud of myself and the entire staff at tamms prison. We can hold are heads up high in knowing that the job we do makes a difference. signed Don Wethington

My name is Marilyn Aden and I am a 13 year correctional officer employed at Tamms Correctional Center. I am strongly opposed to the closure of The Tamms Correctional Center. I would like to address some misconceptions about Tamms CC. It does cost a lot of money to house one inmate at Tamms CC, but not \$ 90,000 dollars an inmate. We are not inhuman. We treat the inmates housed at Tamms CC with decency and respect. Inmates at Tamms CC are afforded numerous opportunities. Inmates are allowed recreational time, educational services, medical services, mental health services, barber services, legal services, library services, visits, and chaplaincy services which include church services conducted by outside volunteers. When an inmate is sentenced to the Department of Corrections, they are not automatically placed at Tamms CC. No matter how heinous their crimes. Inmates are sent to

Tamms after disruptive behavior at another State of Illinois prison. The disruptive behaviors can be, but are not limited to staff assaults, inmate on inmate assaults, and gang activity that endangers the safety of the penal institution, inmates housed there, and the staff providing security at these institutions. Since Tamms opened the above for mentioned activities have seen a drastic decrease. The reason for this is that inmates know that if they commit disruptive behavior at these other institutions then they are subject to be moved to Tamms. Some of the inmates at Tamms would like to stay at Tamms CC. They feel safe and even like it here. Tamms is doing what it was designed to do.

Tamms is located in rural Alexander County in the city of Tamms, Illinois. This region of Southern Illinois is below the poverty level and has a high unemployment rate, and a high rate of welfare recipients. This is a very economically depressed area. How is putting 300 plus employees on the welfare and unemployment programs going to stimulate an already crippled economy and government?. It is not. The work we do generates tax dollars for the state that provide these government assisted programs. Businesses are going to suffer a tremendous loss if Tamms CC closes. Tamms CC employs numerous citizens from the entire Southern Illinois region. We patronize these businesses by the purchasing of groceries, gas, lodging, recreational activities, dining out, automobile repair and new car purchases just to name a few. What are these businesses going to do when we cannot afford to patronize them anymore? Some of the small business owners will be forced to close their doors. How is that helping to save the state money? This is a chain effect of loss.

Our prisons are already overcrowded. How is closing these state facilities going to help the issue of overcrowding? Prison overcrowding is a real problem in this state and makes our prisons dangerous to work in and live in.

I work with a young man whom recently got married and is expecting his first child about the time of the projected closing of Tamms CC. How is the added stress of the impending closure of this facility affecting the health of his wife and unborn baby? This couple is going to have to uproot their lives at a tender time for them. When they are suppose to be celebrating a beautiful time in their lives, their lives will be marred by the bleak financial status of their family.

I work with another man who paints a very vivid picture in black and white of what life is like after a prison closure. He worked at Sheridan CC when it closed its doors. The dismal stories he relives for us on a daily basis gives us an idea of how bleak and stressful our lives are getting ready to become over the next few months. He speaks of the impact on the communities and the individuals lives that worked there at the time. He is fearful for his lively hood and the lively hood of his co-workers.

I personally have a 4 year old daughter that asks me if we are going to be okay if the prison closes and mommy loses her job. I try to reassure her that we are going to be okay. I am not sure if I am trying to convince her or me. She cries about it sometimes. I try to conceal my tears, while I dry hers.

There are hundreds of stories just like these. What are we to do when one of the largest employers in this area, closes its doors? I am pleading with you to take into consideration the things I have said here. Tamms provides an invaluable service to the citizens of Illinois. We keep our communities safe, inmates safe, and our staff inside the penal institutions safe. We are doing what we were designed to do., Taking pressure off the other institutions and providing security for those inmates that cannot function in another facility. Safety is our number 1 priority at Tamms Correctional Center. Please keep us open so we can continue to serve our citizens of this state.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. I pray you make the right decision and keep Tamms open. Tamms works!!

Marilyn Aden
Concerned Citizen
Employee of Tamms CC

Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability
ATTN: Facility Closure
703 Stratton Building
Springfield, IL 62706

March 30, 2012

To Whom It May Concerned:

Hi my name is Jacqueline Warford I am a law abiding citizen of the United States of America where freedom rings, residing in Cook County ~ Chicago, Illinois.

I write to you about Facility Being Closed: Tamms Correctional Center

My Position: Proponent

My testimony is as follows:

I am in favor of Tamms CC being closed. My opinion that it is an unjust treatment to mankind for a human being to be locked up in solitary confinement for 23hrs a day for 7 days a week. If this is the purpose for it remaining to be in existence to house the worst of the worst in which this should not be a remedy to resolve the issue. I find that it is a catch 22, now that attention has been brought to Tamms not being suitable living conditions for anyone let alone the prisoners, and if conditions are changed in the near future it stand to have a motive for a point to be proven and those who are not in Tamms CC will be subject to being transferred; perhaps (for what ever reason). Whereas I know that volatile circumstances/problems/offenses/issues does happen; inmates that are effected by the move to Tamms CC should not be categorized and group in a single theory therefore I am say that I do not agree with the guidelines for housing prisoners at Tamms and that this should not be used as a tool to bring about nonvolatile behavior from inmates that are chosen to be housed there by the same token it is unfair for the inmates that are sent to Tamms CC to be used as projects as a scare factor to deter the other inmates out of being sent to this facility.

Exactly what example is being made from this?

Who make the determination to select inmates to be placed in Tamms?

What are the guidelines that are outlined for monitoring or reviewing or evaluating to show improvement for the inmates to be placed back in general population or to be "properly placed"?

Overall what is considered Rehabilitation?

It is not conducive for inmates to be locked away and left unnoticed, I feel that, it has been brought to my attention

We live under grace and mercy and it should be abide by and the Prison System should not abuse their authority to create rules to justify cruel and harsh treatment as punishment to the prisoners who are at Tamms Correctional Center it should not be parallel to a concentration camp.

I stand in agreement with Governor's Quinn proposal for the closing of the Tamms CC facility for the reasons as I have mentioned above.

Jacqueline Warford

To whom it may concern.

I want to voice my concern for the closing of the Tamms Prison.

I am the Pastor of Caledonia Community Church in Olmsted II and also work at Shawnee Community College as an instructor.

This move would be devastating to the lives of the people and families represented here in Southern Illinois.

In case you have not noticed there is not much happening down here, economically speaking and we can not really afford to loose much else or we will have no tax base at all.

I realize times are hard but this is a blow that I do not know that the extreme tip of Southern Illinois can absorb.

Please reconsider what you are about to do.

Thank you for listening.

John L . Windings

Supermax Prisons: A Brief Review of the Scholarly Literature

Dr. Stephen F. Eisenman, Northwestern University

Executive Summary

The creation of supermax prisons in the 1980s was widely touted as a solution to prison violence and rising recidivism rates (1a). By concentrating and secluding the “worst of the worst” in extremely secure facilities, the supermax would rid existing prisons of its most troublesome offenders, and serve as a deterrent (1b).

But a review of the existing scholarly literature reveals that supermax prisons have not reduced aggregate (system-wide) violence against either prisoners or guards (2a-2d). Indeed, one sociological study suggests that supermax prisons pose unique dangers to the psychological health of corrections officers (2e).

Supermax prisons do not lower recidivism rates. Indeed, there is evidence – drawn from Washington State, Arizona, and Illinois -- that they have had exactly the opposite effect (3a-c). Moreover, recidivism rates in Illinois have steadily climbed since the opening of Tamms supermax in 1998 (4a-b). The accumulated data thus indicates that supermax prisons reduce neither aggregate prison violence nor lower recidivism rates, and that their use needs to be regulated or reduced (4c).

1. The Supermax Rationale

1a. Except for a brief period in the early nineteenth century, long-term solitary confinement has been an unusual form of punishment in the United States. But in 1983, the practice was revived at the federal prison in Marion, Illinois after the killings of two guards. The “Marion lockdown” in turn spawned a new generation of so-called “supermax” prisons, among the first of which was Pelican Bay in 1989, whose harsh regime, according to Federal District Court Judge Thelton Henderson in 1995, “may well hover on the edge of what is humanly tolerable for those with normal resilience, particularly when endured for extended periods of time.” [\[i\]](#)

1b. Nine years after Pelican Bay, Tamms supermax in Southern Illinois was opened to receive its first prisoners. Its purpose, according to the Illinois Task Force on Crime and Corrections, whose 1993 report led directly to the establishment of Tamms, was to “reduce violence, protect the safety of staff and inmates, and improve the functioning of the four, antiquated, maximum security facilities.” [\[ii\]](#) A similar rationale – the control of “difficult management cases” [\[iii\]](#), as well as improving the safety of prisoners, guards, and the general public -- has been used for the establishment of supermax facilities in other states, but evidence that these prisons have reduced violence or had a deterrent effect is conspicuously lacking. [\[iv\]](#)

2. *Tamms and Prison Violence*

2a. In an article by Jody Sundt, (et al), "The Sociopolitical Context of Prison Violence and Its Control," the authors argued: "There was no association between the opening of a supermax [at Tamms] and inmate-on-inmate assaults; however, the supermax appears to have resulted in an abrupt, permanent reduction in assaults against staff."^[vi] Sundt has recently written to clarify the conclusion: "In our article we refer to an 'abrupt, permanent' effect. This phrase is used to describe the mathematical form of the effect and should not be interpreted to mean that Tamms has permanently made the IDOC a safer place to work. We simply do not know enough about supermax or about the effect of Tamms specifically, to make an educated guess about the long-term effectiveness of these facilities." Indeed, in an earlier article, Sundt and her colleagues noted that: "the implementation of a supermax had no effect on levels of inmate-on-staff assaults in Minnesota, [and] temporarily *increased* staff injuries in Arizona."^[vi]

2b. A re-analysis of Sundt's data undercuts even further the argument that the creation of the supermax regime at Tamms lowered aggregate violence in Illinois prisons. The Illinois data upon which Sundt and her colleagues study was based was limited to just 15 months, from March 1998 to July 1999, and the recorded reduction in assaults against guards was limited to the single month following the opening of Tamms, after which rates of violence against staff began to increase, eventually negating the prior gains. Data from the 2000 IDOC annual report shows that overall inmate-on-staff assaults actually *increased* from 1998 to 1999, from 681 to 686.^[vii] In addition, the 2002 IDOC annual report indicates that although overall assaults committed on staff and inmates with a weapon decreased from 1998 to 2002, they significantly increased again from 2001 to 2002, from 33 to 53.^[viii]

2c. A broader review of the history reveals another important fact: assaults against prison guards in Illinois prisons began to decline *two years before* the opening of Tamms supermax. Following the release of the Valukas Report in 1993, and in the wake of the scandal surrounding the discovery and broadcast of the Richard Speck sex tapes in 1996, significant changes were made to insure the security of Illinois' maximum security prisons. These changes included the zoning of large prisons into a number of smaller sub-units to better control inmates, the use of armed staff to escort prisoners during movements, the expansion of segregation units and cells in existing minimum and maximum-security prisons, and the implementation of a "gang-free" prison program.^[ix] These and other changes had an immediate impact upon the number of prison assaults. Indeed, by the time Tamms opened two years later, the number of assaults on staff had dropped to a 15-year low despite an escalating prison population.

2d. The insignificance of Tamms supermax prison for any reduction of aggregate prison violence in Illinois has been remarked by Chad Briggs, Sundt's co-researcher on both the 2003 and 2008 studies. In a recent correspondence, he re-stated his published conclusion: "Despite claims from prison officials that these types of prison facilities have had highly desirable impacts on levels of prison violence and safety, to date relevant empirical evaluations have been largely non-existent ... [In Illinois and elsewhere] there appears to have been little effort to analyze the potential effectiveness of the policy. Its utility was assumed self-evident."^[x]

2e. In her book, *Total Confinement*, medical anthropologist Lorna Rhodes, documents the ways in which the daily regime at the Washington State supermax – including the frequency with which desperate prisoners feel compelled to use their own excrement as weapons -- leads to what one officer called a “hardening” or indifference among guards to other human beings.^[xi] Some officers explicitly fear, as Rhodes puts it, that they “are veering away from humanity toward dirt.” The regular cleaning up of cells covered with feces, the violent “forced extraction” of inmates from cells, and routine searching of prisoners’ body cavities are all routine aspects of the life of a corrections officer at a supermax facility. They take a psychological and physical toll as great or greater than the assaults some guards suffer at non-supermax prisons.

3. *Recidivism Rates of Supermax Inmates*

3a. In a pilot study by David Lovell and Clark Johnson of the University of Washington, the authors examined the probability, timing and seriousness of offenses of men released from state supermax prisons (Intensive Management Units or IMUs), compared with that of men who have not served time in IMUs. The total number of men released from Washington DOC facilities during the two-year period under review (1997-98) was approximately 8,000; the number of men that had served at least twelve weeks (most much longer) in IMUs was 242. The former IMU prisoners were carefully matched with non-IMU prisoners (controls) according to a comprehensive pattern of indicators: age of first offense, past misdemeanors, past felonies, past violent felonies, race or ethnicity, drug offenses, first time offender status, and felony versatility. There was also matching with controls according to mental illness. The authors defined recidivism as the commission of a new offense within three years of release.

3b. The results from the Washington study were clear: The recidivism rate for men that had served in IMUs was higher than that for men in the control group who had not served time in IMUs. For felonies, the increase was statistically insignificant (47% compared to 40%), but for more serious felonies (violence against persons), the increase was pronounced: 36% to 24%.

3c. The authors are careful to state that causality cannot be inferred from their research. But they conclude their study by stating:

We found, with qualifications, that IMU assignment predicts *higher* recidivism. We may conclude that IMU confinement does not appear to *help* control recidivism, which advances knowledge beyond its present null state. But we do not know whether the predictive effect is due to the IMU experience or to some psychological process that leads prison staff to see the offender as threatening and which, after release, leads to further criminal aggression.^[xii]

4. Illinois Recidivism Rates after Tamms

4a. The average adult recidivism rate in Illinois, according to data provided by the Illinois Department of corrections, in the two years prior to the opening of Tamms supermax in 1998 was 42.5%. In the two years following the opening of Tamms, it

averaged 46.2%. In the following two years, (FY- exits 200-2001), during which time the population at Tamms reached its peak, and when knowledge of the prison (and thus potential deterrent effect), was likely to have been most widely disseminated within and without the prison system, the average rate of adult recidivism was 54.5%. Described another way, adult recidivism in Illinois increased by more than 28% from 1996 (40.2%) to 2001 (56.4%).

4b. There are many factors that may cause the rate of recidivism to rise, including more effective or aggressive policing, stricter rules of parole, changing demographics, and economic factors that have nothing to do with supermax prisons. But it is nevertheless clear that there is no evidence that supermax confinement reduces overall recidivism rates in Illinois; if anything, just the opposite.

4c. As this review and summary of recent scholarship shows, claims that the supermax prison at Tamms, Illinois – or any other supermax – has reduced aggregate prison violence are unproved. Nor are claims that the supermax regime lowers rates of recidivism born out by the facts. In some cases, supermax prisons tend to modestly increase both rates. This evidence, combined with certain knowledge – not discussed here – of the enormous financial cost of supermax prisons, and the profoundly destructive effect they have upon the mental stability of prisoners, suggests that significant reform of the supermax system is long overdue.

[i] Madrid v. Gomez, No. C.90-3094-THE Class Action, Findings of fact, conclusions of law, and order U.S. Court for the Northern District of California, January, 1995, p. 1280.

[ii] Anton R. Valukas and the Illinois Task Force on Crime and Corrections, *Final Report*, (Springfield: State of Illinois Printing Office), 1993, p. 87.

[iii] California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation website: <http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Visitors/Facilities/PBSP.html>

[iv] David Lovell and Clark Johnson, "Felony and Violent Recidivism Among Supermax Prison Inmates in Washington State: A Pilot Study," Department of Psychosocial & Community Health, University of Washington, p. ii. Also see: King, "The Effects of Supermax Confinement," pp. 137-138, who addresses the general lack of evidence and the difficulty of conducting such studies without long-term, baseline data,

[v] *The Prison Journal*, Vol. 88, No. 1, 94-122, 2008, p.

[vi] Briggs et al, p. 1341.

[vii] Illinois Department of Corrections Annual Report, FY00, p. 180.

[viii] Illinois Department of Corrections Annual Report, FY02, p. 191.

[ix] Illinois Department of Corrections, *Response Of The Illinois Department Of Corrections To The Final Report Of The Expert Panel On Performance Review*, July 7,1997, passim.

[x] E-mail correspondence, April 23, 2008.

[xi] Lorna Amarasingham Rhodes, *Total Confinement: Madness and Reason in the Maximum Security Prison*, (Berkely: University of California Press), 2004, p. 47.

[xii] David Lovell and Clark Johnson, p. 19.

To The Honorable Governor Pat Quinn
Sen. Jeffrey Schoenberg
Rep. Patricia Bellock

I have read of the possible foreclosure of Tamms which forces me to express my concerns over the possibility, relative to the security of Illinois residents and prison guards and personnel.

My former son in law is housed there. He is a cruel, mean, selfish, diabolical double murderer with a degree in Psychics from Virginia Military Institute and who was a Nuclear Engineer for the State of Illinois, before he committed his two horrendous and sinful and tragic murders.

This story has been shown in two separate shows of CBS's 48 Hours Mystery and on Murder By The Book show on TRU TV and in a book entitled "Invitation to a Murder" by Gail Zimmerman.

While at Pontiac a Maximum Security prison, he mingled with another "lifer" in the yard and conjured up a scenario where he wanted to hire "hit men" to kill his ex-lover and cut her tongue out and bury her 30 feet deep and also murder his ex-friend and his wife and two children and then to kill me, because he didn't like the letters I have sent him.

Honorable sirs: the above comments from others are noted and many have expressed the inhumane treatment that these convicts of Tamms have received. My son-in-law was transferred for a significant reason to Tamms. He is a VERY DANGEROUS INDIVIDUAL, AS ARE MANY OTHERS AT TAMMS!

They are at Tamms as they cannot co-mingle with other prisoners, as they may be harmful to anybody they may come in contact with.

What hasn't been addressed so far though in all these above comments are the Pain and Suffering and Grief and Anxieties and Distress and Misery and Anguish and Woe and Depression and the Bleeding Hearts.....THE VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES HAVE TO LIVE WITH ALL THEIR LIVES.....DUE TO THESE INDIVIDUALS WHO RESIDE AT TAMMS, WHO CREATED ALL THESE TRAGIC EVENTS!

My former son-in-law who I loved and treated like a son, deserves to be punished for what he did and for the terrible circumstances he created. He murdered my daughter by hitting her in the head 7 times with a steel hammer! DOES HE DESERVE COMPASSION? I DON'T THINK SO!

Mr. Governor, please don't close Tamms as it serves a very valuable function. It treats the worst individuals as they should be treated.

Thank you for your kind attention. I would humbly ask for a confirmation of receipt of this email.

Respectfully,
Ira Drescher

To the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability. I ask of you to please keep the Tamms Correctional Center open. I work at Tamms C-MAX .I am a correctional officer . I started my career with the IDOC in 1997 at Menard correctional center. I have seen the cell houses on fire from the disruptive inmates out of control , the blood shed of officers and inmates, the cells of the gang members painted in the colors of their gang and having to ask the gang chief politely to have his boys to lockup and to have to walk the gallery with the hair on the back of my neck standing up not knowing if i was going home to see my wife and kids. This was truly the way things ran at Menard until Tamms C-Max opened up and started to place the most disruptive and gang chief inmates at Tamms. With Tamms the correctional officers through out the prison system in Illinois are in charge not the gangs or the chiefs. The staff assaults have dropped the inmate on inmate assaults have dropped, and with Tamms as a correctional officer i know i am going home after the shift to see my wife and little girls. I speak for all of

the staff that works through out the minnum meadium and max prisons in Illinois Tamms Corretional Center TAMMS C- MAX WORKS! If Tamms closes all of the correctional officers superintends,food supervisors that was murdered before Tamms C-Max opened up will all be in vein,because if you close the TAMMS C- Max the inmates through out the state prisons will take control of the IDOC. Why make the same mistake again , why close a new correctional center that was built and paid for by us tax payers and kill the local economy a correctinal center that has proved itself to work for the citizens of Illinois and for IDOC , a correctional center that since has been open and running NO IDOC STAFF HAS BEEN MURDERD!! so please keep TAMMS C-Max open , and by doing so you all will be saving the tax payers money and most importantly some ones life!

THANKYOU,

Correctinal Officer Keith Benefield ,and famliy.

COGFA COMMISSION,

I am writing this letter in total opposition to the closure of Tamms Correctional Center. I have been employed at Tamms since the work camp was opened in 1995. As someone who sees firsthand what the employees have to deal with on a daily basis inside this institution, I strongly believe the mission statement of this institution is a necessity for the safety and security all the IDOC employees statewide. The offenders we have were given a chance to pay their debt to society in a structured setting at a maximum institution but were not able to do so; hence they were transferred to Tamms where they get a chance to earn the privileges that normal offenders have. I would implore this commission to look at the statistics since the SuperMax was opened and make up your own mind on how important it is to keep this institution operational. **Numerous Federal lawsuits have been brought against the Constitutionality of Tamms and never have we lost.** It would be in the best interest of the people in the State of Illinois to keep Tamms C.C. open as the deterrent it was built for.

Jim Bailey

Dear Commissioners,

I am an employee of Tamms Correctional Center with 16 years of experience which includes 2 other facilities. I would like to explain my opposition to the closure of the most effective management facility in the Department.

Currently, Tamms houses less that 4 tenths of 1 percent of IDOC's population. As many citizens in Chicago know, particularly the innocent bystanders such as the 6 year old girl recently murdered,

Chicago gangs and their leaders are responsible for so much heartache. The innocent children that are shot on a weekly basis is a sad reminder that a small percentage of the population can be responsible for so much evil and have no regard to the law or morality. As the hardworking police, investigators, and prosecutors seek and convict those responsible for this senseless violence, we await the arrival of the one's convicted of such heinous activities. Unfortunately their havoc does not cease once they hit the gates of the Department. Once they have created more gang violence or serve as a leader who orders violence, they are then sent to Tamms so that their repercussions can be better managed. There are also inmates in Tamms who have broken "prison rules" (as one critic keeps repeating). Such "rules" are similar to societies: murder, rape, kidnapping, aggravated battery, unlawful use of a weapon, possession of a weapon, possession of drugs, etc.

While staff murders and assaults have decreased, so have inmate murders and assaults decreased. The inmates at Tamms are treated better at Tamms in an air conditioned environment with bigger cells than any other maximum security facility. Inmates are also housed in the cleanest, safest, and drug free environment. Tamms has also implemented telephone calls, video visitation, GED courses, religious services, Behavior Incentive Program, and many brag, the best food. Tamms has successfully managed to make the entire Department safer for staff and inmates. While all inmates are treated fairly and civil rights protected to the fullest, at what point do we focus more of the victims and potential victims feelings, and protect the other 49,000 inmates and 11,000 employees. Economically, I believe that critics have an oversight of who controls the inmate population and who has fully staffed Tamms. With an increase of staff and decrease of inmates, this escalates the cost per inmate figures. Critics also have the inability to fathom the that a life is priceless as the families of the murdered, assaulted, and raped staff and inmates. The cold fact of the cost of compensation to murdered staff and inmate's families should never be an economic factor over the morality of saving just one life in another facility in IDOC. Regarding the mental health of Tamms inmates, Tamms has the best mental health housing unit in the state who successfully manage the mentally ill who cannot be housed at the State's Psychiatric facility due to their extreme violence. While one death is too many, Tamms' suicide rate far exceeds the other facilities in the State. Tamms has had only one suicide which again is too many.

To simplify Tamm's effectiveness, prior to the David Speck tapes being exposed, anybody could walk into a prison in Illinois and found out within minutes who the gang leaders were, in contrast now it is the most elusive information in prison. Please do not allow history to repeat itself and let us continue to do our jobs in keeping the rest of the staff and inmates safe.

Thank you

Kevin Reichert

First off let me say I am against closing Tamm's Correctional Center. I have worked there for over ten years and no we don't get paid to write these letters.

I want to clear up a few things that have been said and written about Tamm's Super Max. In these letters I keep seeing the terms "solitary confinement" and Isolation

For those who have never been to Tamm's It sounds like the hole in Shawshank Redemption. (where the inmate gets no light and can't talk to anybody) We do not have any solitary confinement cells at Tamm's C-Max.

We do have cable TV and Walkman radios for most of the inmates. We do have the cleanest cells, all cells are air conditioned and heated, Menard, Statesville and Pontiac are not.

We do have a minister, educators, doctors and a full library, two law libraries in every cell house. These inmates play checkers, chess and cards, watch the ball games on there

new flat screen TVs DOES NOT SOUND LIKE TORTURE OR INHUMANE TREATMENT TO ME !

I also think a lot of you seem to forget why these inmates are in Tamm's not because of the crimes they did on the street but the crime they did in PRISON . You have to earn your way to Tamm's!

RAPE FEMALE STAFF, STABBED STAFF AND OTHER INMATES, ESCAPES,

You can't put these guys in time out. They have been to the others prisons already that is why they are at Tamm's. Tamm's was built and the staff was trained to keep this type of inmate. Tamm's prison is even an accredited prison.

Moving this level of inmates to other institutions that are already over crowded is just asking for officers or inmates to be hurt or killed.

Please reconsider not closing Tamm,s C-MAX not only for the safety reason but also for the financial reason to the staff and surrounding area that will be destroyed by the loss of some if not all the best jobs in this area.

Thank You

C/O Willy Clayton

There are other ways to cut back on spending besides closing down a much needed prison and taking peoples jobs away. The ones that want Tamms Prison shut down should let them move next to them for awhile, or better yet go and spend one day behind bars with them. When you put the worst of the worst in with other inmates then remember they only have one life sentence. So they can hurt or kill other officers or inmates because they figure Tamms is gone they got nowhere else to send me. If Tamms is shut down I pray for the publics and officers and yes other inmates safety.

Karen Toler

before u make ur decision just remeber ur putting lives over money wats more important money or lives? ur taking mothers and fathers from there kids n the kids have to live the rest there lives without a mother or father just because u wanna save some money thats crazy

anthony smith

Commision Members:

This writing is to oppose the proposed closure of the Tamms Correctional Center.

As I life long resident of beautiful Southern Illinois I am outraged at the constant political games the Governor delves out to us. Closing Tamms would be yet another one. It would not only take jobs away from hard working tax payers, but would devastate our economy which is barely keeping float as it is. When these jobs are lost, stores, restaurants, Motels, banks, small businesses, private practices like Medical Facilities and Professional Offices Businesses, gas stations and numerous other businesses would close. School enrollment will drop as families move out of state to make a better life because their home state turned its back on them. With these closings would come major losses in tax monies collected by the state to keep things running. What would be left realistically speaking would be welfare and state aid families. The lower half of our state would become the poorest part. Even worse than it is now, because Quinn and is Chicago believe we are the illegitimate child born from an affair they would like to sweep under the rug and forget! More families, once they have lost their jobs, their homes, their cars, their self being, would join the ranks of the state fed and raised. No longer would they go to work proudly to earn a wage and have taxes taken out to support our fair state, because if you're on the State Aids Payroll you don't have to pay taxes.....Who among you honestly thinks this would be a good thing? I believe the Governor recently said F-You to us again in not pushing to get FEMA help for Harrisburg. He wants to come up with "state monies" to help.....oh, is that why Facilities are closing? Not to mention the safety of Corrections Workers, who have used Tamms as a placed to house the deadliest and worst of all inmates incarcerated. My husband, a 25yr retired former Shawnee Correctional Center Employee said they would often use the threat of shipping inmates to Tamms to sway them into good behavior. With out this "dangling threat" what other recourse can they use. Not that Tamms is harsh to inmates, because it is not, but letting inmates believe it was and that things could

get worse, shifted many an escalated situation in the employees favor. What will they use without Tamms? If we are to turn back the clocks to before Tamms, when Corrections Officers and Employees were getting hurt and killed, then lets turn the entire operations back to when there were only 1 Director and 2 Deputy Directors, northern region and southern region, not 30. And wheres is all the Inmate Commissary Money going from the Institution "stores" the inmates purchase items from. That's right they have stores, at cost prices, cheaper than you and me, where is that money? I know at one Institute it was like 1 million \$dollar\$\$\$\$ sells a year. Wheres that money?? Where's a Commission to check into this when you need one?? If you close Tamms, I hope you take every Inmate from Chicago and let them back out into the streets they came from! Your for them, take them back!!!!!!

Concerned Citizen
Karen Hicks

I am currently employed at Tamms. I began my career at Menard. While working there prior to Tamms opening it was a very dangerous place to work at and to be incarcerated at. I always realized that working in a prison had certain hazards but never thought that just walking out on a daily basis was a successful day. When the inmates realized that Tamms was a reality the mood changed drastically and it became a much safer place to work at and be incarcerated at. The inmates mood changed again drastically when they started seeing their fellow inmates transferred to Tamms. The last 8 months that I spent at Menard prior to transferring to Tamms was much safer.

You have a greater responsibility than I could ever realize. You have to put a price on human life. While there is never a guarantee in the career field we have chosen, Tamms makes all on Department of Corrections facilities much safer environment to live and to work at.

I want to thank you for your time in reading this and your time in considering what I have said.

James Smith

Tamms has done it's job by protecting staff and inmates. Before Tamms opened the department of corrections was total chaos with staff and inmate assaultshappening nearly every day. If Tamms closes it won't affect just Alexander county but almost every county in southern Illinois a few counties in Missouri and a couple counties in Kentucky. The prisons in Illinois are already over capacity so why would anyone want to close a prison when the state needs more room. The safety of employees and Illinois citizens should be the top priority.

Jason Ashworth

Tamms opened 14 years ago Illinois has drastic reductions in inmate assaults on staff, gang activity and countless other illegal activities within the Illinois prison system. Closing Tamms is, without question, the recipe for a complete breakdown of control amongst Illinois Correctional Facilities. People have no idea on the type of inmates that are housed at Tamms. Choir boys, they are not! Many innocent people have lost a member of their families due to inmate violence BEFORE Tamms.. PLEASE do not allow a reoccurrence of these types of past happenings! I cannot fathom the amount of assaults that have NOT taken place in other facilities since Tamms Correctional Center. PEOPLES LIVES DEPEND ON TAMMS! Many inmates DO NOT WANT TO LEAVE TAMMS.. Inmates are provided with 3 hot meals per day, have an option to educate themselves (quite a few have received paralegal certificates since being at Tamms), are provided the option to religious service of their choice, health care and not to forget, have more TV stations than many people in the general public and they do have yard time! I do not want to begin to imagine how the Illinois prison system will turn back to the ways of the 80's if Tamms is closed.

Ben Goins

After reading all of the testimonies, the ones that are for closing Tamms Correctional Center need to be aware of the following:

Tamms Correctional Center (Supermax) was opened due to the violence of the offender population and was to be the deterrent to this problem. To this day, the Supermax has done and will continue to do its job. As you would have it, we would throw away all the years of progress and safety for staff as well as the States Offender population. In essence, not to mention reality, we would revert back to the time before the Supermax was built. Currently, I serve as a Lieutenant at the Supermax and during my career I have been sued for doing my job, spit on, had blood, urine, feces thrown on me and been blamed for the Offender being in prison. It's always someone else's fault. Lets get one thing straight, the Offender's at Tamms Supermax got there by their own actions. Let me repeat that for some of you that just can't believe it. They got to Tamms Supermax by their own actions. Offenders at Tamms Supermax have a single occupancy cell that is on average two to three times bigger than any cell in the State. The Offenders receive three meals per day, reading materials, they get flat screen TV's, they get a Walkman to listen to cassette music, they get radios, they also get commissary items such as food and hygiene items. They get yard time, showers, medical care, hospital care when needed, library time, phone calls, religious time in which we cater to many different religions, air conditioning, etc. As you can see, they are not locked up in a cell for 23 hrs. a day. To be blunt, the Offender population at Tamms Supermax receive better care than most law abiding working people that struggle on the outside to make ends meet. Yes that is what I said, law abiding people. One of the speakers that will be speaking against the Tamms Supermax at the hearing at Shawnee College is Brian Nelson. Brian Nelson was housed and served time at the Tamms Supermax Prison due to his own actions at other facilities and is now employed as a paralegal for the Uptown People's Law Center. Tamms must have worked because Mr. Nelson has not returned to prison (yet). I can only imagine the lies he has told these people in order to hide his own past. Some of you have stated that Tamms Supermax is to far South. My response would be that maybe these Offenders should not have broke the law, putting themselves in a position to going to prison in the first place. What about the victims of these Offenders, you obviously care more about creating a dangerous environment for staff than you do about the victim's family members. Let's be honest, these Offenders are not at Tamms for stealing a piece of candy. In closing, I am PROUD to say that I work with some of the best staff in the State. They put their lives on the line every day as they walk through the front door to do a job that most would not. They are highly trained and professional at all times while maintaining themselves in a very dangerous environment, which in turn promotes a high safety faction for the public and the offenders. Closing Tamms would be devastational for the economy, safety and wellbeing of staff as well as the Offender population in other facilities. KEEP TAMMS SUPERMAX OPEN!!!!!!!

Lt. Studer

Tamms Correctional Center

To whom it may concern,

I would like to express my opinion and concerns in opposition of closing the Tamms C-Max and Tamms Minimum Security facilities.

I began my career with the Department of Corrections at the Menard Psychiatric Correctional Center in August of 1995. This institution housed mentally ill offenders and offenders deemed as sexually dangerous persons (SDP's). All of these inmates were single celled due to their unstable or violent behaviors. I know this well, due to the fact that I became a certified tactical unit member at this facility and have remained certified ever since. Many days and nights were spent doing forced cell extractions for someone refusing to take their medications, assaulting staff with objects from their cells, or throwing urine or feces on staff. This institution was closed in late 1996 after 3+ million dollars had been spent on upgrades to house the future mentally ill and infirmed inmates throughout the state. This move was not deemed a "closure" by the state, merely an "incorporation" to the Menard Correctional Center since all of the employed staff could be absorbed into Menards facility vacancies. I recall spending days and weeks during the summer of 1996 literally TAKING BACK THE MENARD CORRECTIONAL CENTER, as well as all of the other institutions in the Southern region, and the state. How did we do this? We used the Southern and Statewide Tactical Unit. The number of weapons, drugs, gang related material, money, jewelry, cell phones, home stereo equipment and other modern amenities was astonishing to say the least.

The people of Illinois screamed for justice after a man named Richard Speck, was videotaped inside Stateville Correctional Center doing drugs, explaining how easy it was to get anything he wanted, and kissing his boyfriend and telling the public that he had more sex on the inside of prison walls than he ever did in the free world. After a massive statewide shakedown the people of Illinois were told that there would be a remedy to these sorts of problems because Tamms Super Max was in the process of being completed.

Justice has been served, and the Tamms Super Max facility has done exactly what it was designed to do. It's removed the most violent offenders, along with leaders of Security Threat Groups (a.k.a. GANGS), and housed them where they can no longer influence or be a threat to others. Since that time the violence and the blatant overt and covert threats have stopped plain and simple. Segregation housing units at Menard, Pontiac, and Stateville are at MAX CAPACITY! Where will these inmates be placed, many of whom cannot go back to these facilities due to the atrocities they have committed!?!?

Will you believe an art history professor, who has written 5 books unrelated to the subject about how cruel this place is; or someone who has been an Officer, Sergeant, Captain, and Lieutenant at this facility? These inmates receive more attention at Tamms than any other institution in the state.....bar none! They go to yard, get showers, use the library (or one of the 18 law libraries), get medical and mental health services, get face to face or video visits, make phone calls, receive barber services, religious services, and educational services.....MOST ARE PROVIDED DAILY, THE OTHERS ARE JUST A

REQUEST SLIP AWAY! Wing check/rounds are made every 30 minutes and there is not a check that goes by that an employee does not stop to listen to a problem or a request.

I fear for the lives of my fellow Correctional Staff at other facilities. There is no place to separate the most violent and nefarious inmates, and no reason for the inmates not to commit a violent or heinous act if there is no threat of a place that will take them out of their comfort zone! If we allow these inmates to get comfortable again VIOLENCE WILL MOST DEFINITELY OCCUR!

There is also a 200 bed work camp at the Tamms facility. The people of the surrounding seven southern counties are, and have been, served well by this facility. Inmates do clean up and maintenance details in the surrounding municipalities, and have provided aid during the many natural disasters that have plagued the area in recent and past years!

Why would you close a facility that protects staff at other institutions?! Why would you close a facility that provides so much support to the surrounding communities?! You can say it is too costly, BUT WHAT PRICE DO YOU PUT ON HUMAN LIVES THAT PROTECT SOCIETY 7 DAYS A WEEK AND 24 HOURS A DAY. While you are home enjoying your family, Correctional staff across the state are putting their lives at risk so you can do this. Tamms makes these staff members chances of enjoying their families a whole lot greater!! I implore you to reconsider a knee jerk reaction to a statewide budget crisis.

Sincerely,

Lieutenant Bradley Shields

Tamms Correctional Center

I recently read an article I found in the daily Egyptian.com entitled, "Tamms' prison closure is humane right."

In this article the writer states that, "To know some men are being confined 23 out of 24 hours a day with a guard shoving their meals through a slot in a cell wall is unimaginable."

She also states that The National Religious Campaign Against Torture realizes that prolonged solitary confinement can cause serious harm to prisoners. She would see the closure of Tamms as a symbolic victory for the fight to end prolonged solitary confinement.

I would like to remind the writer of this article, and all that agree with her, that the men housed at Tamms didn't get there by chance. They were put in the prison system for a reason. They all committed horrible crimes. While in prison, they chose to continue their crime spree, which is why they are at Tamms.

If Tamms is shut down inmates will still be locked up 23 out of 24 hours a day. It will just be in a smaller cell.

The crimes that these men have committed ensures that they will NEVER be able to return to society. They are confined in this way to ensure their safety as well as the safety of everyone else around them.

I would like for anyone who thinks that putting someone in solitary confinement after they've committed numerous crimes a "torture", to talk to the families who have lost people they love at the hands of the men housed at Tamms. Torture is not being able to ever see, touch, or speak to your loved one because they were taken from you by inmates at Tamms. their lives, and the lives of their families are shattered forever.

The fact of the matter is, if Tamms is closed, the inmates housed there will still be in solitary confinement. They will just be at a facility that is less equipped to care for them. In turn, it will be a dangerous situation for staff members as well as other inmates.

We can't put a price tag on safety. Tamms is a vital part of the Illinois prison system. Without it the prisons will explode with violence. Just look at the lives of the thirty plus staff members that were taken by these men. Do we really want to repeat this?

Mekisha Hileman,
Concerned Citizen

19 Stitches in my face and head; a broken nose; a 3" scar on my right forearm...

In March of 2003, as a tactical unit officer at Tamms CC, I took a Cmax elevated security inmate from Tamms CC to Stateville CC for an overnight writ/transfer. The following morning, accompanied by another Tamms tactical officer, we arrived at Stateville CC, (where we had dropped off our inmate the previous evening), to take our Tamms inmate to Will Co. court. Little did I know that within the hour I would be in a fight for my life. At Tamms, Cmax, inmates are not allowed to interact with staff outside of their cells without restraints on. This is an enhanced security procedure to insure our staff's safety. But due to lessened security measures at Stateville Maximum Security Center, our Cmax elevated security inmate was allowed to be unrestrained within close proximity to the Stateville Lt., myself, and the other Tamms tactical officer. The inmate had not said a word to either of us (Tactical escort officers) the day before or the morning of the violent assault. The inmate gave NO indication what-so-ever of being irritated. But, because he (the inmate) was allowed to be placed in a position of lesser security measures, I was on "High Alert".

After his strip-search, and upon putting on his last shoe, the inmate came up swinging his closed fist at my face. I tried to duck his punch but was hit across the face, spinning me and causing my head to hit the door. I went down in the corner of the room on my side as the inmate repeatedly struck me. Due to the quick thinking and bravery on behalf of the staff involved, I am still able to write this testimony.

The result: I received 19stitches in my eye area and head. I also had a deviated septum which required surgery to remove cartilage from my nose. In addition, I had a 3 + inch laceration on my arm which required starry strips to close.

Procedures at Tamms Supermax were written to contain and control some of the most dangerous and disruptive inmates in the state. Procedures at Stateville Maximum Security Center had to be rewritten after my violent assault in a retroactive attempt to keep their staff safe. Please don't close Tamms Cmax and release our supermax inmates into a less secure environment where procedures may have to be retroactively changed after staff are injured or worse. Tamms Cmax was build for a reason. And it works! Thank you.

Mark Bundren



To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this to oppose the closing of the Tamms Correctional Center. Saying that it will save 26 million dollars is not accurate. Most of the employees will transfer to other facilities and the costs associated with housing, feeding, and clothing inmates will be added to the budgets of other prisons. The savings would be minimal. Closing a prison in an over crowded system does not make sense. Especially one that is doing the job it was designed to do. Because there have been not any employee deaths at the hands of inmates since Tamms was opened, has made people forget about the riots, killings, and rapes, not to mention the whole Richard Speck incident. Tamms continues to work. To those who are crying about inhumane treatment and torture, I wish you could see just how good these inmates really have it. To the COGFA committee, Gov. Quinn, and the Illinois House and Senate members, closing Tamms will not save the amount of money proposed. And if you close Tamms, the blood of the first Correctional employee killed by an inmate, will be on your hands! Then you can explain to that person's family member how "we had to close Tamms to save the state money." Can you really put a price tag on someone's life? No! But by closing Tamms that would be exactly what you would be doing. I urge you to keep this Prison open for the safety of all the men and women who do this thankless job everyday.

S. Lane

My name is Sherry Bagby. I am against the Governor's proposal to close Tamms CC. I raised my brother and sister and I have two children of my own. My brother, my sister, and my daughter work for Illinois Department of Corrections. My brother was brutally attacked by an inmate at Lawrence CC. He was bit multiple times around his face and neck. He had a thumb-sized hole in his neck that became very infected. He not only suffered physically from his attack, but suffered mentally also. He was merely doing his job when he told the inmate to give him wires that he had in his cell. The offender was not provoked in anyway and just viciously attacked him. He was sent to Tamms CC, where my daughter and my sister work. He was sent to another prison prior to his release from IDOC. He was released early due to Governor Quinn's initiative to free up bed space in prisons. This inmate murdered an elderly man shortly after his release. Tamms is a necessity. Tamms keeps other prisons safe. I hate that my brother was attacked, but I thank God he was not murdered like many others. I have read about other IDOC staff that was not as fortunate as he was. The following are some of the officers who lost their lives for doing their jobs. These officers are the reason we need Tamms.

Correctional Officer Lawrence "Frank" Kush, 24 was murdered by three inmates at the Stateville Correctional Center. Two of the inmates were sentenced to life in prison for the murder and the other inmate died while awaiting trial. He was beaten with a pipe and died from his injuries. His murderers live at Tamms CC. Officer Kush was killed for doing his job in what the Will Co. State's Attorney called "a

gang-related, premeditated assassination.” Correctional Officer Kush had served with the Illinois Department of Corrections for two years. He was survived by his wife and two daughters

Superintendent Robert Taylor was assaulted, stabbed and beaten to death by four inmates in the South Cell House of the Pontiac Correctional Center. Superintendent Taylor was stabbed with a 10-inch shank two times in the chest and four times in the back and suffered several blows to the head with a pipe. Two inmates were sentenced to death and the other two inmates received life sentences. On January 11, 2003, the outgoing governor granted clemency to all 167 Illinois death row inmates as one of his last acts in office. Both inmates' sentences were commuted to life without parole. One of his murderers reside at Tamms CC. He was already serving life when he killed Superintendent Taylor. When his death sentence was commuted, he got away with no additional sentence. Superintendent Taylor was survived by his wife, son, three daughters, mother, stepfather, four brothers and three sisters.

CO Robert J. Conkle, CO Stanley E. Cole, and Lt. William Nelson Thomas were stabbed to death on July 22, 1978. They were killed during a riot at the Pontiac Correctional Center. Around 9:00 am, about 500 inmates were returning to their cells in the North Cell House when a riot erupted. The inmates set fire to several buildings in the complex resulting in an estimated \$4 million in damages. Lieutenant Thomas and Correctional Officer Conkle were stabbed with shanks numerous times shortly after the riot began. Correctional Officer Cole was stabbed with a screwdriver. Correctional center staff and Illinois State Police troopers were able to restore order and return the inmates to their cells 11 hours later. Seventeen inmates were charged with the murders of the correctional officers, but none were convicted. Correctional Officer Conkle had served two months, Correctional Officer Cole had served with the Illinois Department of Corrections for one year. He was survived by his son and daughter. Lieutenant Thomas had served with the Illinois Department of Corrections for four years and was a US Army veteran of the Korean War.

\$4 million dollars in 1978 in damages do not include the lives of the officers killed. There is no price you can put on the lives of the staff that were murdered in the line of duty. I know what my daughter and my sister do at Tamms CC. Inmates at Tamms are not suffering. They do receive services. They do receive programming. I know that IDOC is safer because of Tamms CC. My brother continues to walk into a prison every day after his attack and he continues to do his job. Please remember the individuals that gave their lives and remember the thousands of individuals like him when you make your recommendation.

Sherry Bagby

I am against the closure of Tamms. Tamms Correctional Center is doing what Tamms CC was designed and built to do and whether people like it or not. Before people start "yelling" "tortures goes on at Tamms", they need to actually know what goes on inside Tamms instead of going by what is said by the "hear sayers".

If Tamms closes, are the ones that want Tamms to close ready to have the correctional officers' assaults and deaths on their conscious because the assaults and deaths will be on the rise? Since the death penalty was done away with in Illinois and now Governor Quinn wants to close Tamms, the inmates have no incentive to "behave" themselves. Think about that. The inmates were sent to Tamms for a reason. Because they could not be handled where they were at and needed to be sent to Tamms.

On top of all that, closing Tamms would devastate the area. Just because there are two prisons in Vienna has no bearing in Alexander county. If you shut Tamms down, you will not only be shutting the prison down, but the small towns as well as some of the small business, and people moving away because there will not be any jobs around for people to stay in the area.

Please rethink closing Tamms.

Paula Rentfro

My name is Toma Osman and I am opposed to the Governor's plan to close Tamms Correctional Center. I have worked at Tamms CC for 14 years. I am a single mother of two boys. Both were born while I have worked there. I make a good living and was deeply concerned for my family when I heard the Governor's plan to close the prison. I have a mortgage and a car payment like everyone else. This week I have been to the doctor and so have both my boys - one three different times - allergies, sinus infection, and then chicken pox. My point is - I am very thankful for my job, my pay, and my insurance. I even enjoy my job - like most people, most the time. I know the state is broke, but I don't think I personally caused the fiscal problems. I pay taxes-both income and property. I spend my money - so I pay sales tax too. I am not collecting public aid. I don't have free healthcare. And I haven't committed any crimes that cause me to need to be incarcerated. I live in Southern Illinois. If I lose my job, I will be moving or I will become a burden instead of a productive member of society. This is my home. My family is here. There aren't many jobs to be had. I would be one of the almost 200 that wouldn't have any options. I knew I may have a hard time convincing the rest of the state that their money is being spent necessarily way down south, but I didn't realize I may have to defend myself personally too.

Tamms was created for a reason. I believe in its cause. I have family and friends working in prisons throughout Illinois. I have also had family locked up in prisons in Illinois. Tamms does make IDOC safer for staff and inmates alike. The numbers show this. The \$73 million spent to build Tamms 15 years ago were not just thrown downstate to create jobs. So when I get called a Torturer by an Art Teacher

speaking to the Commission. And read in the Sun Times that my career is that of torture. I get mad. I provide programming to the inmates at Tamms. I listen to their complaints and research hundreds of grievances to make sure they are treated professionally and receive medical, dietary, religious, educational, legal, library and many other services. I talk to their families. I call outside vendors. I do my job with professionalism, in an atmosphere that is not always pleasant. I know murderers, rapists, child molesters, gang bangers and gang chiefs by their voice when they call me by my first name. I speak to these men and their families just as I would speak to Professor Eisenman or any member of the Year Ten Committee on the street. I am pleasant and professional, but I wouldn't stand there while they called me names, and I wouldn't vow revenge or plan my next act of torture either. I would have to argue that these inmates are not sensory deprived or locked away without human contact. I see the programming they are delivered to their doors every day. The phrases Cruel and Unusual, Sensory Deprivation, and Solitary Confinement may get thrown around a lot, but I have yet to see where Tamms has been found to be Cruel and Unusual in any court.

I don't think I need to prove that IDOC was controlled by gangs before Tamms. I even read an article in the Southern Illinoisan last week by Alan Mills of the Uptown People's Law Center, Chicago, Illinois agreeing to that fact. He indicated that due to changes made within IDOC that gangs no longer run prisons. Well Tamms is an essential part of those changes. So knowing that gangs ran the prisons before Tamms, I couldn't believe some of the names testifying were inmates housed at Tamms because of the danger they had been at other institutions. Johnnie Walton admitted in testimony on youtube that he had ran the prisons, but had changed before being taken to Tamms. Brian Nelson has repeated how he hand wrote the Bible to stay busy, but I haven't heard testimony from him on how he ordered hits on prison staff. I know these men. I've spoke to them while providing them with access to the courts through the prison law library. While incarcerated at Tamms, Brian Nelson had the opportunity to train himself to be the paralegal he is today.

This is my job and my livelihood, but I am not asking anyone to keep the doors open for my paycheck alone. This prison is important and necessary to control violence in IDOC. These inmates were housed in other institutions and were not controlled until Tamms was opened. Tamms was designed to remove the most disruptive and problematic inmates from other institutions to protect the staff and inmates alike. The removal of these inmates has worked. Placing them back into the institutions where they came from places IDOC right back to the days of gangs being in control. Keep Tamms open. My job saves lives.

Toma Osman

To the members of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability,

Lost in this whole debate over the proposed closure of Tamms Correctional Center is the voices of the victims of the crimes that were committed by the individuals currently housed at Tamms Correctional Center. Nobody seems to care that these inmates committed mostly heinous crimes to get incarcerated in the first place. They found their way to Tamms Correctional Center because they couldn't conform to the rules of the open population prisons they were housed in originally.

The proponents of this closure seem to think that those who are incarcerated should be shown mercy. Did the inmates housed at Tamms Correctional Center show their victims any mercy? Everybody knows the answer to that question.

You have heard many complaints from the families of these inmates about the distance they have to travel to visit. I fully understand what they are getting at, but, think about the families of the victims of the crimes these inmates committed. How far do you think they would travel to see their loved one again. My guess is, much farther than most visitors have to travel currently. Unfortunately, they don't have that option.

All I'm asking is that you consider those that cannot speak for themselves as you make this decision.

Thank you for allowing me to voice my opinion,

Todd Kelley

My name is Laura Qualls. I am an R.N. that works at TCC. I have been there since Sept., 2002. I am opposed to the closure of TCC. It was established for a purpose and that purpose is to house inmates who have hurt or killed someone when they were being housed in an open population institution. Wherever the IDOC decides to house the inmates it will be exposing the inmate, the worker or an innocent person, who might be there visiting a family member or a friend, in grave danger. The inmates at Tamms have been placed there for a reason. I realize it does cost alot to keep this facility open, but there has to be other ways to decrease spending. How much is a human life worth to you? What about the victums' loved ones? Other prisons in Illinois are overloaded. Are you planning to add more to these institutions?

Laura Qualls

COST: There is a lot of talk about the expense based on 180 inmates but that amount would change if Tamms were allow to receive more inmates that meet the criteria. You could ask why are they intentionally keeping the inmate count low??

CONFINEMENT: People need to know the difference between solitary confinement & single-cell housing.

C. Martie

I am greatly opposed to Tamms Correctional Center being closed. I don't understand how more more people losing their jobs can help Illinois. If the prison is currently run inefficiently, put someone in there that knows how to run it efficiently. Why do they need an Assistant Warden? Why do state employees need more benefits than the average worker has? I have worked in healthcare for 38 years with only 7 paid holidays, and have never understood why State employees need 13 or whatever it is they get.

I hope investigation of state employees drawing workers compensation continues. I personally a married couple who used to work at Choate Mental Health in Anna. He has been off work drawing workers comp for over 10 years. His wife has been off for 4 or 5 years. They are both able to work. Is the State going to pay them forever? And, I hear there are many many more people just like them. To me it seems like if a person is able to work, and drawing a state check, they should be made to do something. If not go back to work at Choate, perhaps pick up litter along the highway?

I mainly want to say that there are surely better ways to reduce the deficit and turn Illinois around, and you all are getting paid to figure it out.

Carolyn Brimm

Dear Commissioners,

I am an employee of Tamms Correctional Center with 16 years of experience which includes 2 other facilities. I would like to explain my opposition to the closure of the most effective management facility in the Department.

Currently, Tamms houses less that 4 tenths of 1 percent of IDOC's population. As many citizens in Chicago know, particularly the innocent bystanders such as the family of the 6 year old girl recently murdered, Chicago gangs and their leaders are responsible for so much heartache. The innocent children that are shot on a weekly basis is a sad reminder that a small percentage of the population can be responsible for so much evil and have no regard to the law or morality. As the hardworking police, investigators, and prosecutors seek and convict those responsible for this senseless violence, we await the arrival of the one's convicted of such heinous activities. Unfortunately their havoc does not cease once they hit the gates of the Department. Once they have created more gang violence or serve as a

leader who orders violence, they are then sent to Tamms so that their repercussions can be better managed. These inmates broke "prison rules" (as one critic keeps repeating). Such "rules" are similar to societies: murder, rape, kidnapping, aggravated battery, unlawful use of a weapon, possession of a weapon, possession of drugs, etc.

Staff and inmate murders and assaults have decreased. The inmates at Tamms are in an air conditioned environment with bigger cells than any other maximum security facility. Inmates are housed in a clean, safe, and drug free environment. Tamms has also implemented reforms such as telephone calls, video visitation, GED courses, religious services, Behavior Incentive Program, and many brag, the best food. Tamms has successfully managed to make the entire Department safer for staff and inmates. While all inmates are treated fairly and civil rights protected to the fullest, at what point do we focus more of the victims and potential victims feelings, and protect the other 49,000 inmates and 11,000 employees.

Tamms also protects the communities of Illinois. There has not been an escape from Tamms in its short history. Unfortunately this is not true about our other facilities.

Economically, I believe that critics have an oversight of who controls the inmate population and who has fully staffed Tamms. With an increase of staff and decrease of inmates, this escalates the cost per inmate figures. Critics also have the inability to fathom that a life is priceless just ask the families of the murdered, assaulted, and raped staff and inmates. The cold fact of the cost of compensation to murdered staff and inmate's families should never be an economic factor over the morality of saving just one life in another facility in IDOC.

Tamms has the best mental health staff and special treatment unit in the state who successfully manage the mentally ill who cannot be housed at the State's Psychiatric facility due to their extreme violence. While one death is too many, Tamms' suicide rate far exceeds the other facilities in the State. Tamms has had only one suicide which again is too many.

To simplify Tamm's effectiveness, prior to the Richard Speck tapes being exposed, anybody could walk into a prison in Illinois and found out within minutes who the gang leaders were, in contrast now it is the most elusive information in prison. Please do not allow history to repeat itself and let us continue to do our jobs in keeping the rest of the staff and inmates safe.

Thank you
Kevin Reichert

Dear Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability,

I am in definite opposition to the closure of the Tamms Supermax Prison. I oppose the closure for many reasons. Close to three hundred jobs being lost in a small community such as this would only further devastate this area financially. I have family and friends who work various jobs at the prison. A family member of mine personally got his face rearranged by an inmate from this prison (not while at Tamms, but while moving him and in custody at one of the prisons they would like to send these inmates back to). These other prisons they think these inmates should return to cannot handle these prisoners, not due to lack of ability, these inmates just have no limits. They will not be able to be monitored as closely when moved to general population prisons. These prisoners are the absolute worst of the worst, many serving several life sentences, people like this do not care if more punishment is added, they will be there regardless. Most of these people have no regard for human life. For example the man at Tamms who has spoken out about his excitement of the possible closing of Tamms, which to him means that he will get transferred and when he does his plan is to kill as many people as possible, because he knows he can at any other prison. How terribly scary! This is not a financial issue, this is a how much do you value human life issue. Of course it costs more to house these inmates and I think anyone should be willing to pay more to have these inmates locked up somewhere where they can't hurt and kill anyone anymore, as opposed to cramming them in with general population where they will take out other inmates as well as prison staff. Would you close down the ICU of a hospital because it costed more money to treat the very sick? I believe the answer is no. So why would you close down this prison who treats the VERY sick. Please for the safety of all the residents of Illinois (I know we southerner Illinoisans are not thought of very often when making decisions, but we are still residents of this state) keep Tamms open!

Mandy Hazel

I protest the closure of the prison at Tamms, Illinois.
This would be detrimental to the community.

Deborah A Piercy
Anna, Illinois

I am writing a statement to request the closure of Tamms Supermax Prison in Southern Illinois. This kind of facility is an shameful for the state of Illinois and can find no justification legally, morally or socially. In addition to closing this prison, the people who have been subjected to the conditions of incarceration practiced in supermax facilities need support to help recover from their traumas.

Sincerely
Rozalinda Borcila

COGFA,

I attended the conference in Ullin, IL. on monday. I am so appauled at these actions of Gov. Quinn. I don't understand the closing of Tamms in the least or the degree of what it will accomplish. Nothing, the way I see it. In the long run it will cost more if the prison is closed. This prison sounds normal to me to be blunt this prison is doing it's job of housing the worst of the worst. These people that want it closed don't really know what they are saying. If our strong male officers are in danger of these criminals then these criminals need to be at Tamms.

Tamms has the mental support capacity so what's the gripe? I don't see the gripe.....

You need to KEEP TAMMS **OPEN OPEN OPEN**

MRS. JANIE PEAS

To Whom It May Concern:

The American Civil Liberties Union states, "The damaging affects of solitary confinement are well known and undisputed." The ACLU also attempts to make their case by saying that cat-o'-nine-tails lashing an inmate's back are cruel and unusual punishment. What? What country do they live in? We are not a third world country. You cannot compare Tamms Correctional Center with the atrocities in Nigeria.

ACLU states, "Closing Tamms will advance human rights, preserve public safety, and save the Illinois taxpayers tens of millions of dollars..." Let's talk about the rights of three Illinois Department of Corrections employees, Lt. Thomas, Officer Conkle, and Officer Cole, who were violently murdered during the 1978 Riot at Pontiac Correctional Center. Hundreds of knives and many guns were confiscated from the inmates. The 10 hour incident cost the state more than 4 million dollars in property damage alone. If you calculated that property damage alone with today's dollar, it would be more like 400 million dollars. You say that the State of Illinois could save 8 million dollars a year by closing Tamms? Let's do the math... That would mean you would have to "hope" a riot never occurred in the next 50 years to break even. (Glad you're not managing my money.) That is not even taking into consideration that, in 1978, each employee's family was probably only compensated a couple thousand dollars for their senseless death. If you calculated the compensation package of today and the negligence in the lawsuit, I am sure you would be closer to a billion dollars for 10 hours of rioting. I will not waste the Commission's time doing the math on that figure.

I respectfully urge the Commission to save the state millions of dollars, staff lives, and inmate lives by not listening to the bias statement of the ACLU. Better yet, let the 20,000 members of the ACLU take custody of the Tamms Supermax offenders. That will save the Illinois taxpayers tens of millions of dollars and take care of the ACLU.

Please do the right thing. Keep the staff, inmate population, and citizens of this state safe! KEEP TAMMS OPEN!

Sincerely,

R.K. Clark
Supporter of Victim Rights

I am against closing Tamms Correctional Center!! We need to keep the facility open not only for the safety of the people who live outside the prison walls but for the safety of ALL the staff of ALL the Illinois prisons! We also need to help keep Southern Illinois on the map! If you close Tamms, you will be taking a lot of jobs away from a lot of people and their families. Families who help in these communities.
Families who would have to move.

Please rethink closing Tamms!

Thank you
Bruce Rentfro

I attended the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability (COGFA) hearing on April 2, 2012, at Shawnee Community College, Ullin, Illinois. The focus of this event was to hear testimony regarding the proposed closure of the Tamms CC.

A decision regarding this facility closure needs to be made based on credible messages delivered by credible messengers. I feel that our local legislators, current and past employees of the Illinois Department of Corrections, and representatives of local groups and communities presented factual statements regarding the effects that this closure will have on the safety of all Illinois citizens if the Tamms CC inmates are moved to other state facilities. Proponents of the closure cited the Pontiac and Menard locations as replacements. The Pontiac Correctional Center was established in 1871, and the Menard Correctional Center was established in 1876. The cost to retrofit these archaic institutions to accommodate super maximum security Tamms CC inmates would certainly not be cost effective. In contrast, the Tamms CC, opened in 1998, is a modern facility specifically designed for the highest security level.

The closure of the Tamms CC would also have a devastating effect on the economy of the already impoverished counties of Southern Illinois. Eliminating jobs does nothing to enhance the state's economy. Unemployed persons do not pay income taxes because they have no income. They do not

pay sales taxes because they have no resources to purchase items. The "domino effect" felt by local businesses will be endless and directly affect the state coffers.

I feel that the proponents of the closure of the Tamms CC used emotional arguments to state their case. Unfortunately, there was no opportunity to refute their allegations. I toured the Tamms CC prior to its opening in 1998. I distinctly remember mattresses on the "concrete" beds referred to by some speakers. Also, I believe the statement regarding "rat droppings" in the food is not only a gross exaggeration but a blatant lie.

It appears that some of those speaking of their relatives in prison forgot why they were there. We are talking about inmates who have committed heinous and abominable crimes, not Eagle Scouts. As one person succinctly stated, no one is sentenced to the Tamms CC; a prisoner earns his way there.

The testimony of Brian Nelson, a former Tamms CC inmate, was particularly emotional. As I listened, I first thought he opposed the closure. He spoke in such glowing terms of the Tamms CC staff that it almost seemed that he missed them since his discharge and would like to be back in their care. The hyperboles that he used to describe his feelings for the correctional officers painted the picture of a big, happy family. This is certainly a contrast to the plaintive and heartrending comments from the families of other inmates! In the ironic ending to Nelson's manipulative soliloquy, he said that this same care could have been provided anywhere. He may be a master speaker, but I seriously doubt that an ex-inmate and the families of inmates are unbiased and could be deemed credible messengers delivering credible messages!

I have never been incarcerated and, subsequently, do not have first hand knowledge of life behind bars. Unfortunately, I heard a number of persons speaking in favor of the Tamms CC closure who have the same non-existent knowledge of prison life as I. The decision regarding Tamms CC should not be based on emotion but rather on two factors: 1) the safety of all Illinois citizens, including prison staff and inmates, and 2) the local economy which ultimately affects the state economy.

Thank you for coming to our Southern Illinois area to hear the testimony. With the exception of Senator Donne Trotter's reference to a statement made by a speaker as a "bunch of BS," the hearing was conducted in a very professional manner.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Teske Heinle
1015 East Patton Drive
Marion, IL 62959

To Whom It May Concern

I am currently Executive Director of the Alexander County Housing Authority and I was formerly Mayor of the City of Cairo for 12 years 1991 - 2003.

I must point out there are several considerations which must be weighed before a decision on closure of the Tamms Prison is made.

1. Cost
2. Prison Population
3. Public Safety
4. Economic Collateral Damage

I will not adress the first three because those in favor of keeping Tamms open have done a very good job on those issues.

However, I believe I am well versed in describing the economic impact of a closure of the Tamms Facility on Alexander County.

Alexander County is the poorest County in the State of Illinois. We consistently have highest welfare rate, unemployment rates, as well as many underemployed at low wages. Also seniors living only on social security.

The Alexander County Housing Authority has the highest number of public housing units per capita than any County in Illinois, with the largest number paying minimum rents.

NOW take Tamm Prison away - They are our County's largest employer, those employees pay taxes, have homes, shop, donate to our general economy in may ways.

Bottom line - Alexander County cannot economically absorb the loss of the Prison, unlike some areas that might be able to.

I strongly urge you to consider the economic impact on Alexander County before your decision is made.

Sincerely,
James Wilson
Cairo, IL

I would like to give my written opposition to the closing of Tamms SuperMax Prison. I have worked as a nurse there for the past ten years. The offenders are treated very well and are far from being isolated. They talk with each other on the wings, out on the yards, and in the libraries. They play chess, have radios, newspapers, books, and TV's. They go to the yard and the shower uncuffed and unshackled, most of them 5 days a week. The only ones that have to be escorted are the ones that have proven they can't be trusted to go alone. There are very few cells that have plexiglass over their doors. Again, only the ones that have spit, thrown urine or feces have had to have this put up. They go to the dentist, get x-rays, EKG's, all lab services, and are seen on nurse or MD sick calls all right in this facility. We provide 24/7 medical including nurse rounds where a nurse goes by EVERY cell once per shift. (We have 3 shifts) Their medications are delivered by a nurse to their cell door at several different scheduled times during the day and night. The officers go by EVERY cell every 30 minutes to do wing checks. I HARDLY THINK THEY ARE IN TOTAL ISOLATION!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I have seen offenders beat their heads on the walls and claim the officers did it. I have seen offenders cut themselves to get certain nurses to come and treat their wounds and then get mad when they didn't show up and say they were fine now. These type of offenders are manipulators not mentally ill. Our facility has cameras on all the wings and all cell extractions are videoed so I don't think any officer would take a chance on being on camera beating an offender as the sister's of one of our residents stated at the hearing. Also, I would like to clarify that we have never had an offender cut off his testicle at Tamms. And as for the offender that hung himself, it should be brought out that he had attempted to hand himself as a teenager a couple times. So, it had nothing to do with being at Tamms. By the way, I was one of the nurses who kept him alive. He died 2 days later at the hospital, after his family unplugged him.

Carol G George, LPN

Dear COGFA.

I am writing you concerning the Tamms Prison issue. I am urging you to request that the prison remain open.

I attended the public hearing that was held on April 2, 2012 at Shawnee Community College. I heard both sides of the argument.

It would seem to me it's obvious the prison should stay open.

The first panel that spoke consisted of members of IDOC representing the governors office. During their statements Mr. Godinez, (director) stated it would save the state approximately twenty-five million dollars. He also said there are two hundred single cells waiting to be used at Pontiac and Menard Correctional Centers. Both of the statements are simply not true. The state would not save any money;

Mr. Godinez himself admitted there would have to be extra staff to ensure the safety of existing staff and other inmates. This twenty-five million dollars the state claims it would save would be diminished in no time when you factor in the cost of moving these men weekly from one prison to the next because no one else can handle them.

It is a proven fact that before Tamms these inmates were referred to as “circuit riders”, meaning they may be at Pontiac a week or two then Menard and so on and so forth from prison to prison. This costs a tremendous amount of money when you are juggling inmates from one institution to the next. Many times prison transporters would pass each other on the interstate, one going north, one south. This is simply ridiculous. Extra staff has to be present during a transport because it is such a dangerous task. Many times the state has to pay overtime to perform a transport because the prisons are so understaffed no one can be spared to leave his or her post.

Also, there is the fact that the twenty-five million dollar savings is a drop in the bucket compared to what the state will incur in lawsuits. When these men seriously injure, rape, or kill other inmates and or staff again, the state will be responsible. They knowingly put these violent murderers in a less secure environment because they are scrambling to save a buck.

The second argument Mr. Godinez expressed was that the state had two hundred single cells waiting for the inmates at Tamms. This simply isn't true. The maximum security prisons are busting at the seams already. To throw these inmates from Tamms on top of them is nothing more than a recipe for a horrific disaster.

The other group that wanted to see Tamms closed, was representing human rights. They claimed it was “torture” to be locked away twenty three out of twenty four hours a day.

Torture is the families that have lost their loved ones because of the inmates housed at Tamms. They don't have the luxury of holding, seeing, or speaking to their loved one because they have been murdered by these men housed at Tamms.

I realize that many of the inmates at Tamms are from the northern part of the state, and it is a long drive for their family to come to see them, (as stated by Gov. Quinn's office back in Feb. 2012). Well that is too bad. These men gave up their right to be close to their families when they chose to commit crimes that most of us can't even imagine. Not only did they commit on the outside, they re-offended multiple times while inside maximum security prison walls. This is why they must stay at Tamms.

As far as being locked up twenty three out of twenty four hours a day, this will not change no matter where they are housed. The director himself admitted they will still be locked up twenty three out of twenty four hours a day, in solitary confinement. The only difference is they will be in a smaller cell than they currently are, and they will no longer enjoy their climate controlled environment. So it seems absurd to me that the human rights group would want the inmates moved away from Tamms. If they

are so concerned about them they would want them to stay where they are; in a larger cell and a comfortable climate.

This proposal by Governor Quinn to close the only prison in the state than can keep staff safe as well as other inmates is outrageous!

Tamms Correctional Center is a vital part of the Illinois Prison System. Shutting it down and expecting that the rest of the prisons will be able to function in a safe manner is ridiculous. It would be like trying to drive your car without an engine. It simply will not work. Although an engine is expensive to maintain, it is absolutely necessary. Tamms is the engine that keeps IDOC running smoothly.

Thank you for your time,

Mekisha Hileman
Concerned and outraged Illinois voter

Apparently I made a mistake and checked the wrong box on my Tamm's closure form, marking proponent and not opponent (p. 270). I am very much more for keeping Tamm's open due to the peace of mind it give correctional officers, such as myself, that if we are just assaulted (and not killed) by an inmate that there is a secure supermax to send them. I believe that Tamm's also makes inmates think twice before wanting to commit a assault on staff due to the threat of going to Tamm's Supermax, where they do loose some of the freedoms they may currently possess, but Tamm's is in no way inhumane and does not violate any human rights, as all IDOC facilities have to follow stringent rules set for by the government to operate. I am curious just how much your committee values a human life? To me if you were close Tamm's C.C. you do not think much of the IDOC staff that potentially put their lives in harms way everyday to keep YOU and YOUR CHILDREN safe from murders, rapist, child molesters, thieves, and drug dealers, as these now inmates would not have much of a deterrent to not commit these same acts of violence while in prison.

Thanks,

Roger Sullivan.

My name is Amy Cacioppo and I am against the closure of Tamms Correctional Center. Illinois prisons are already over crowded and by closing Tamms you would be creating an even more dangerous situation for not only the employees that work there but also for the other inmates. Working in a correctional center myself, you would greatly be increasing the risk for injury by inmate assault. Tamms is a supermax for a reason. The inmates housed there are there for a reason! They are the worst of the worst often reoffending while already incarcerated. By prisons already being full they would be even more flooded then they already are. Would you feel comfortable telling my family their daughter, sister, and mother has been seriously hurt, killed, or is being held hostage? This is a call you would greatly be increasing the odds of having to make if you close Tamms Correctional Center.

Thank you for your time,
Amy Cacioppo

I attended the public hearing at scc on monday. What a trip, I can see NO reason whatsoever for this facility to be closed only a few minor petty gripes nothing major. I agree tcc could be somewhat revamped maybe for a few minor provisions, but to close it permanently, how absurd.

Gov. Quinn thinks only about Chicago as if Chicago is the only city in Illinois he doesn't give southern Illinois a second glance. If Tamms closes it would bring devastation to southern Illinois in the biggest fashion not only affect the officers, but staff, and the surrounding small businesses in the area. Does he want to starve us out and leave us for dead? It sure does look that way.

I saw the signs "I am a mom" So what "I am a father" and I don't see their gripes at all.

I vote to leave Tamms Correctional Center OPEN---OPEN---OPEN

Robert G. Peas
ta Sergeant @Vienna Correctional Center

I would like to comment on the articles written by the human rights groups on this website. They all act like the offenders at Tamms have been plunged into a big black hole and never see the light of day. That's absolutely ludicrous! These offenders are not "socially isolated... from other human beings". These offenders are able to effectively communicate with the other offenders on their wing. They also have social workers, nurses, counselors, a chaplain, a librarian, and a paralegal that come to see them and provide them services on a regular basis, not to mention the officers that routinely come on the wings. The cell doors at Tamms are perforated so they are actually **LESS** isolated than they would be in seg cells at other institutions. What do these organizations expect the Department to do with offenders who **repeatedly** assault staff and other offenders, especially since Illinois no longer has the death penalty? Should we just let them continue running around general population endangering the lives of

everyone they come across? I definitely agree that “normal” people don’t go around **raping women and children, sticking guns up women’s vaginas, or stabbing people**, but I also don’t think that gives these offenders a free pass to go around wreaking havoc. I also don’t think all people who commit horrific crimes are “mentally ill”. I believe some people are just **pure evil!** Even if Tamms is closed, the Department states in its report that they’re going to establish elevated security wings at two other institutions, so it’s not like the offenders are going to have it any better anywhere else. In fact, in an overcrowded prison system, they’re probably **not** going to get as much service as they get at Tamms. Finally, the fact remains that Tamms has been open since 1998 and has **NEVER** been declared unconstitutional.

T. Elder, Retired

I was at the COGFA Hearing for the closing of Tamms Correctional Center. I want to put it here and now in writing that I am OPPOSED to the closing of Tamms C. C. As a former employee of Tamms, I personally and professionally feel that the Governor’s actions on closing ANY corrections facility is wrong and unethical.

I have worked with every single employee at Tamms and have not found one to be cruel to any inmate. Tamms was built to house the worst of the worst. But to close it and shift inmates around to different facilities is wrong. They cannot go to any other facility and co-habit with other inmates. That is why they are at Tamms. They cannot be released to another facility to be around the same people they harmed. If the Governor wants the Brisbon, Pappademetrio, and Winger’s back on the streets , let them be housed with him in Chicago. I’m sure they can all be best buddies!
He has really lost his mind on this one!

Yeah, what about our raises he took from us contractually?
He has let everyone down in the State of Illinois.

Please do NOT close Tamms Correctional Center. Please do not be a Quinn and balance the budget on the backs of the State Employees like his predecessors.

Thank you!
Joanna Hosch



Just wanted you to be able to put a face to some of the children who would be affected by the closure of Tamms Correctional Center. Please don't take their Daddy's job away!

Peggy Dent

To whom this may concern,

I am writing this email in regards to the proposed closure of the prison in Tamms. I am 100% opposed to this proposition. Recently, I have heard a lot of accusations of the "cruelty" in Tamms. This is ludicrous. I KNOW that those prisoners get treated well. They get to say if they are "too cold" or "too hot" and also get a different menu if pork or other items are "against their religion." I wonder if raping a woman or stabbing a correctional officer was against their religion, too? Or is that allowed? I also have been hearing about how isolation can cause depression. Well...let's think about this. Why does no one address the feelings and depression of the victims' family? They have to live with knowing that their family member was brutally killed or raped by someone who just felt like committing a crime. We did not put those prisoners in Tamms, they put themselves there! If this is all about money, all of the people

that will be put out of their jobs will draw unemployment. Where will this money come from? After all is said and done, the state of Illinois will not save much money by closing this facility. Please, do the right thing.

Sincerely,

Katherine Tatum



Closing TAMMS is a huge mistake. I've worked for over 21 years in IDOC and was at both Stateville CC (Jan 91-Jan 93) and Menard CC (Jan 93-Jun 00) and was also there during the time period that the Richard Speck videos surfaced. That triggered a huge change in thought process and thus the ball for the creation of Tamms came into play. There wasn't a day go by when both staff and inmates were assaulted someplace. Inmates that were assaulting people, inmates and staff, were sent to places such as Stateville, Joliet (before some fool closed it), Pontiac and Menard. However once at one of the MAX prisons, the assaults kept coming. Thus the decision to build TAMMS was made and inmates whom couldn't get along with anyone else were given another option, and option that they didn't like and thus

they finally decided to abide by the IDOC rules and do their COURT order criminal time and get out of TAMMS and start the process of returning back to a lower level of prison and behave.

This process has worked for many years, with the exception of a few inmates whom won't ever most likely leave TAMMS because they are a danger or threat to everyone and won't change. Now because the General Assembly and the Governor won't raise taxes, which I don't like either, and continues to allow those on welfare more and more programs and don't encourage them to get off them, the Governor thinks that closing TAMMS would help save the state money.

My question to you within this prison closure section is simple...Would you like to see an ex-felon move next door to you? Assuming that he/she could afford to live where those on this committee live, as I can only assume that you make much more than any regular Correctional Officer or any office personal at any IDOC prison. We are charged with keeping the murders, rapists, burglars, drug dealers and every other type of criminal off the streets till they complete their COURT ordered sentences. Not to release them on parole early and hope that we have enough parole agents to check up on them like they should be.

I have security cameras installed at my home in rural Jefferson County, IL to watch my place and protect my family. I have a family member whom was raped when she was only 14 years old. While I work at a place that is loaded with sex offenders, I don't vent my anger at them, but understand that I don't want them living next to me. I'd rather have a landfill or huge pig farm living next to me than have a convicted felon or sex offender living next to me. Those that live in the city and near one of the few over crowded half-way shelters whom many of our inmates go to first don't have a choice. But yet closing of TAMMS would result in moving inmates from TAMMS to other place and that means a huge domino of moves and releases.

So, while I agree TAMMS per inmate cost is very high, I want to be able to leave work on a daily bases knowing that I can walk out of there in one piece as well as my fellow staff at other prisons can do so as well. I also know that the Governor don't always listen to this committee but for once hope he does, providing you do the right thing.

Paul Rainwater
Correctional Officer for over 21 years.

By the way, the "Mothers for the closure of TAMMS" march that I was told might happen, gave up their right of how their grown sons are treated, which by the way is human based on the crimes that they have done and continue to do, when they allowed their "boys" to join gangs, sell drugs, rob people, and yes murder people. Had they done their job as a parent like I'm sure many of you have done, TAMMS as well as many other prisons wouldn't have ever been needed or built.

Ladies & Gentlemen:

I found yesterday's hearing on the proposed closure of Tamms Correctional Center to be a completely unprofessional and unruly experience. It was stunning and most disappointing that Illinois' Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability permitted the continued disrespectful, rude and unprofessional behavior from the opponents of Tamms' closure, i.e., Tamms correctional officers, their family members and their supporters.

Despite the early reprimands and empty threats to remove these people from the hearing if they did not conduct themselves in a proper and civil manner, Sen. Schoenberg and Rep. Bellock sat in silence while union members and their supporters continued to shout, cheer, clap, give standing ovations, jeer and deliberately intimidate the supporters of Tamms' closure. After the initial gavel banging, which was completely ignored, Commission members saw fit to allow the unruly and raucous behavior to overtake the hearing. And in the ultimate display of complete disregard and disrespect to everyone who took the entire day off to attend the hearing, painstakingly prepared testimony, and traveled hundreds of miles to testify to them, the Commission had the audacity to walk out of the meeting still in progress at 3PM, handing the hearing over to two state representatives with an obvious bias towards the union members.

Under these circumstances, the Commission's attendance was nothing more than lip service to a process that is supposed to provide a fair and unbiased opportunity for interested and affected parties to present their concerns to state government officials. Their behavior made a complete farce of this process and provided obvious evidence of how lightly they view the responsibilities of their appointment to this Commission.

Gayle Ayala
Chester, IL

I was extremely disappointed today by the CGFA's public hearing concerning the closure of the Tamms Correctional Center. It appeared that only a handful of the members of the commission were present, two of the members made very disrespectful comments (I thought they were there to LISTEN, not promote their own personal agendas), and, shockingly, the members LEFT before the hearing was even over! I realize that none of the members present represent this area, but do the people of southern Illinois count for so little? Or, were their minds already made up before the hearing even began?

I saw a few signs today that read, "I am a mother." Well, I too am a mother. I am the very proud and concerned mother of a law abiding, hardworking, good man, who also happens to be a corrections officer at Tamms. Please do not take away his career and his means of honorably supporting his family. Please do not put him and all of the correction officers and employees in danger throughout the state. Please keep Tamms Correctional Center open!

Respectfully,
Peggy Dent

My name is Terry Caliper and I retired from the Tamms Closed Maximum Correctional Center on April 1, 2009. I was the health care administrator and responsible to ensure the inmates incarcerated there received medical services. I began my career with the Department of Corrections in August of 1985 and have witnessed many acts of violence committed by inmates toward staff and other inmates, including a brutal attempted murder of a correctional officer. I firmly believe in the mission of the Tamms Correctional Center and feel that this facility has played a crucial role in keeping staff and inmates within the Illinois prison system safe.

Since the inception of the facility, focus has always been delivering services to inmates according to their constitutional rights in a safe, humane manner. The population at Tamms is highly litigious and our procedures were developed to protect the State of Illinois in the courtroom. To my knowledge, a case alleging the excessive use of force has not been successful to-date. The operating procedures developed at this facility by a group of correctional professionals with collective years of experience have been proven effective.

It is untrue and hurtful for those who work, or have worked there, to hear the allegations of inhumane treatment toward inmates. I respectfully request that Governor Quinn reverse his decision to close this facility.

Sincerely,

Terry Caliper, Retiree

As a concerned resident of Southern Illinois, I strongly oppose the closure of the Tamms Correctional Center. The economic burden that would be placed on our communities would be absolutely devastating. Unemployment rates would be unmanageable, causing further strain on local businesses which would be required to increase contributions to the state unemployment fund. Thousands of lives will be detrimentally affected. Let's not lose sight of the fact the prisoners made choices which placed them in the prison system. They made choices contrary to the laws we are all expected to abide by, and thus they must suffer the consequences of their actions. Unfortunately, many of the prisoners have made additional poor choices once inside the corrections system. These secondary choices have led many of them to the facility at Tamms. These are violent people who do not seem to value human life. The Tamms Correctional Center has controlled these violent offenders, resulting in no additional loss of life of staff or inmate. I appreciate what the Tamms Correctional Facility has done for the southern Illinois economy, for changing individual lives and families through job security and the overall protection it has provided. This facility serves a great purpose and should be allowed to remain open.

Sincerely,

Melissa Moore

Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability
ATTN Facility Closure
703 Stratton Building
Springfield, IL 62706

RE: Opposition to the Closure of Tamms Correctional Center

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am a very proud employee of the State of Illinois. I attended the hearing at Shawnee Community College on April 2, 2012 concerning the closure of Tamms Correctional Center. I want to go on record saying I am greatly opposed to the closure of this facility.

As a state employee and citizen of Illinois, I am very aware of the economic status of our state and the need to overcome such a deficit. However our budget problems started over a decade ago - and everyone is aware that this deficit/problem cannot and will not be corrected in one year or even the length of time that Pat Quinn is Governor of this great state. However Tamms Correctional Center and/or any other correctional center cannot be used as a tool or pawn in this budget war.

The prison system in Illinois is over-crowded everyone knows that. Director Godinez and Bryan Gleckler stated that plans were in place to transfer the inmates of Tamms back to Pontiac, Menard or Stateville. That the Tamms inmates and the inmates of the receiving facilities would be safe. What about the staff? I would like to remind the Commission that Tamms Correctional Center was opened for a specific purpose, after many years of research and study - it was not just a "whim". The planning committee knew something had to be done to stop, or at least decrease, the gang violence, inmate on inmate assaults and inmate on staff assaults that were happening on a daily basis in the correctional facilities of the State of Illinois prior to 1996.

The statement was made that statistics show there was a decline in such activity two years before Tamms opened. That is because all inmates were aware that the Tamms project had been started and there would be consequences for their actions against staff, fellow inmates and of not following the rules and regulations in place.

Testimony was given that the inmates at Tamms were living in inhumane conditions. This is untrue - as anyone who visits the facility would know. The inmates are housed in clean cells. They are provided with 3 nutritious meals a day, good medical and mental health treatment, access to educational opportunities and religious programs if they choose to participate. Tamms employs Correctional Counselors and the inmates have access to their counselors if requested. They are not locked up and kept from all human contact. The only true argument the inmates/families made is the fact they are not allowed "community activities" and there is a reason for that restriction.

The inmates of Tamms Correctional Center were convicted of a crime because they could not follow the rules, regulations or laws of the State of Illinois and thereby incarcerated. While incarcerated these inmates once again were unable to follow the rules, regulations and directives, thereby "blowing their second chance" which is what the inmates and family witnesses were asking for during the hearing. As a consequence of not being able to follow the rules in place, they were transferred to Tamms for disciplinary reasons, either for their safety or the safety of other inmates and/or staff.

When Gov. Quinn slated the closing of Tamms Correctional Center he stated it was for budgetary reasons. That it costs too much to operate this facility. How are we "saving" money by closing Tamms? Would it not be more financially feasible to transfer inmates to Tamms to help resolve some of the overcrowding - not closing a facility that the taxpayers of Illinois are still responsible and are paying for. If Tamms CC closes, the employees would be offered positions in other institutions = no savings in salaries here. The cost of housing the inmates would be transferred to a different facility = no savings here? In fact, research shows that more than 70% of the inmates housed at Tamms Super-Max are serving sentences in excess of 50 years and many are serving life sentences - thus have committed heinous crimes against another person. Where is the savings if we are simply transferring the cost of safety, i.e. cost of running Tamms CC; to emergency room costs, medical expenses, workers compensation payments, disability payments, and most probable law suits by staff and inmates due to Il. Dept. of Corrections inability to provide a safe working and/or living environment. Just transferring costs from one budget to another - no savings here!! To decrease the budget of Il. Dept. of Corrections, why not look at the cost of inmate payroll or the savings that would be shown by using local vendors for food, equipment and other items - just to name a couple areas.

I ask that you consider all aspects of what your recommendation to Gov. Quinn would mean: (1) in closing Tamms you are putting the lives of thousands of men and women at risk - both staff and inmates; (2) the economy in Southern Illinois cannot absorb such a devastating loss of jobs and tax dollars; and (3) this is NOT going to make the impact on the budget as stated. There are many more ways of cutting costs without cutting jobs. In a loss of jobs comes increased unemployment; a decrease in sales tax and revenue from Southern Illinois; as well as the many hardships on families that may be forced to leave the area to find employment - whether it be a corrections employee or his/her spouse; and lastly the children of the corrections families will definitely suffer. The children should not be victims in a budget game. The educational budget has been hit already, please don't make our children suffer by enduring a transfer to a new school, having to make new friends, and adjustments to new surroundings.

Thank you for your time.

Melanie McReynolds

To Whom it May Concern:

There are a lot of comments about Tamms Closed-Maximum Security Prison being inhumane, many false accusations being made by the ACLU, Amnesty International, John Howard and other proponents that want to see Tamms Closed for no other reason than siding with offenders that committed the rape, murder, etc. During my testimony at the Tamms Facility Closure COGFA Hearing on April 2, 2012 we heard more false accusations about Tamms by the proponents that want to see Tamms close.

I gave my testimony about being assaulted at Pontiac Correctional Center by being stabbed by an 11 1/2 in homemade knife as the inmate yelled for me to "die!" then I began talking about the staff that had been violently senselessly murdered. Dr. Neisman from Northwestern University can be seen in the background laughing and pointing to me on stage mocking my testimony about the murdered staff. This can be verified by watching your own camera person's recording of my COGFA Testimony on April 02, 2012 by typing "Lieutenant Randall Clark" on YouTube. This is your film not mine. The proof cannot be disputed.

In my opinion this is a prime example of these types of people's true motives. If he was a sincere advocate of human rights he would not have been laughing and mocking at a testimony about 90 pound Frieda King being violently butchered at Pontiac Correctional Center and about Supt. Robert Taylor being violently murdered. Then again if he knew the camera was on he probably wouldn't have done it. **"Studies have shown that the true color comes out on the canvas when it dries."**

I do feel compassion for the **mothers of the offenders** that tried to raise their children right and now have to suffer the pain and agony of worrying about their children being incarcerated. Sometimes you can't predict what your children might do; however, we should all learn that there are consequences for our actions. I have a lot more compassion for the people that were victimized by their children's senseless actions by taking a life physically or emotionally.

I would like to talk about the staff that have been murdered over the years and would ask that when you read their stories that you consider the loved ones lives that were also affected:

Correctional Officer **Cecil Harbison**, 30, couldn't wait for inmate William Crews to make up his mind whether eh wanted to go to the recreation yard the morning of November 30, 1984, so Crews remained locked in his cell until the other inmates returned that morning. As Harbison turned the crank to the let the other inmates back into their cells, Crews charged charged him and stabbed him 12 times in the back with a shank fabricated from a bell rail. Harbison was employed at Menard Prison and would have been certified as a Correctional Officer within a few weeks. Officer Harbison had a wife and an 8 year old daughter. Can you imagine what her Christmas was like a month later after her dad's death? You heard her testimony at the COGFA Hearing on April 2, 2012, but can you really imagine how your children would feel if it were you?

Correctional Officer **Robert Conkle**, **Stanley Cole**, and Lieutenant **William Thomas** around 9:00am on

Saturday, July 22, 1978 there were approximately 500 inmates returning to their cells in the cell house at Pontiac Prison when a **riot erupted** resulting in the deaths of three staff. 17 inmates were charged with the murders, but none were convicted, due to the chaos. Lieutenant Thomas and Officer Conkle were murdered by being stabbed with shanks numerous times shortly after the riot began near the North House door way. Officer Cole was murdered by being stabbed with a screw driver on the fourth floor of the cell house. Can you imagine how inhumane and senseless these murders must have been. Did you know that they never got to say goodbye to their wife and children. The last thing they saw were inmates standing over the top of them, as they just tried to do their job. There was over 4 million dollars in property damage alone. Hundreds of knives and many guns were later confiscated from the rioting inmates. Many inmates were violently assaulted and some killed as well. The Illinois State Police had to enter the prison with batons and shot guns, some inmate escaped over the 12 foot wall, one female officer was taken hostage, and many buildings and perimeter walls were destroyed. In 1978 the fallen officers families likely only received a couple thousand dollars for the senseless deaths. Today, the property damage alone would be over 400 thousand dollars. If you included the negligent law suits of today with that number the State of Illinois cost of the same 10 hour riot would be over a billion dollars. It is said that it cost \$64,805.00 to house an inmate at Tamms. I believe that our director and governor have moved inmates out of Tamms and increased our staffing to come up with that inaccurate number. In all actuality that number is a lot less. But, if that figure was accurate, which it's not, and Governor Quinn thought he could actually save \$26.3 million by closing Tamms can he ensure that we will not have another riot like we had in 1978? In 1978 the state was faced with a huge deficit like today. Did I tell you that the cause of the 1978 riot was due to overcrowding, like we are experiencing today? In order for Governor Quinn to save 26.3 million dollars a year our great State will have to hope there is not a riot in the next 50 years, just to break even. The last major riot was just 34 years ago. That is not even considering the lawsuits from paying for negligent deaths of offenders and staff by closing our most secure prison in the state. I trust that you will let common sense prevail.

Frieda King, 50, of Pontiac had been employed as a food service supervisor at Pontiac Prison for 2 years and 6 months when she was stabbed numerous times with a 12 inch long butcher knife by inmate Anthony Hall near the cold storage area of the kitchen around 5:30pm on February 08, 1983. Inmate Hall was had been serving a 40 year prison sentence for armed robbery and armed violence after being being previously paroled in 1979 for rape. Many staff that knew Frieda stated that she was a sweetheart and treated everyone fairly and all the staff were surprised that anyone would direct violence toward her least of all. I can recount the look on the officer's face when he told the story of opening the dietary door and falling across her body after she had been murdered then looking up and seeing inmate Hall sitting on a milk crate holding the 12 inch butcher knife as though nothing had happened. You could tell that after 7 years of telling the story that it brought back nightmares every time he recounted the story. I recall vividly working the Dietary as a young officer on the 3-11 shift and late in the shift would have to go into Dietary and check all the doors. I remember how dismal the 140 year old building looked and it saddens me to think that that room was the last thing Frieda saw and that she never got the chance to see her seven children again. It was all taken from her by one person's senseless act. Freida was the **first female officer in law enforcement to be killed** in the line of duty in the State of Illinois. Besides that title, she held the title of "**mom**" to three daughters and four sons that needed her

in their lives. She also held the title of "sister" to seven sisters and four brothers who loved her very much.

I hope you too can always remember Frieda by keeping Tamms open to ensure that all mothers in law enforcement can go home to their babies at the end of their shift.

Randall Clark

I'd like to take this opportunity to respectfully ask you to support the proposed closing of the Tamms Correctional Center. There is a lot of abuse, both physically and mentally, that is going on in that institution. With your support, I am confident that we can make a difference in a lot of lives for the better.

I have also written a letter to Governor Quinn in an attempt to get these issues addressed.

The first issue is the abuse that's taking place by the extended isolation that the inmates go through on a daily basis... 23 hours per day. This causes a lot of mental and emotional issues which includes severe depression, withdrawals, causing inmates to want to harm themselves... just to name a few. Being alone for so long plays havoc on a persons' feelings of self-esteem, self-worth and so many other issues that can't be addressed here.

I have a friend that has a brother who is an inmate at this facility. I'd like to share a letter that I recently received that explains what kind of abuse is taking place. Please take the time to try to understand some of the things that have been happening to him, and I'm sure that he's not the only one going through this.

Just a little about myself... I have been a Illinois State Correctional Officer (1989 - 2000) and am very familiar with what should go on in a prison. I've read and know of accounts of what happens in Tamms, and it isn't right or legal. I also volunteer as a member of the Adams County Emergency Management Agency, an auxiliary police officer, the American Red Cross, and also volunteer at a domestic abuse and violence center here in Quincy, IL. I also hold an Illinois LPN license. To me, there is NO difference between a man beating his wife and children and correctional officers abusing inmates... it's still a human being abusing another human being, and it's our duty to try to put an end to it before it goes any further.

This is a human rights issue, and the correctional officers committing these acts of abuse should be charged and prosecuted with crimes that include intimidation, assault and battery, just to name a few. Please help us put an end to this abuse by closing the Tamms Correctional Center.

If there are any questions that you may have, please feel free to contact me via e-mail and I'll try to answer them.

Randy Collins

513 Hampshire Street

Quincy, IL 62301

(217) 779 - 1564

Here is the letter that I have received:

My brother is in Tamms. I'm here to help clarify what we are spending our states money on at Tamms. Here is a short history of my brother.

In 1991 My sister and her two children were murdered. My brother dealt with this loss by blaming himself for not being there to protect her. His coping mechanism was to drink himself into a blackout. During this blackout he got into a car and repeatedly asked the owner to the help him. She pulled him out of her car and called the police. He was arrested, charged, and convicted of assaulting the police officers, and attempted burglary. I think it is important to know this assault was for spitting.

This worst of the worst inmate never killed anyone, nor did he ever commit some heinous sexual crime. This worst of the worst inmate was a young man raised in poverty, by a mentally ill mother, who had to take on the responsibility of protecting his siblings and caring for his mother when most children are learning to ride a bike and playing t-ball. This worst of the worst inmate was simply a young man that could not deal with the loss of his family, his freedom, and his hope.

I want to read from his perspective his experiences at Tamms.

Quote

"I was relieved to be sent to tamms. I heard they had the best mental health in IDOC. I had written a letter to explain my psychological state; I hoped Dr. Rhodes would read this letter and discuss it with me. I could be taken off suicide watch and get off to a clean start, finally having someone to understand and help."

He later describes his visit with Dr. Rhodes.

"Dressed in a paper jumpsuit that didn't close in the front, my penis hanging out for everyone to see, I was handcuffed behind my back to a small concrete block. I told her about the Menards Tact team brutally beating and degrading me and my subsequent escape attempt the next day. I tried to explain the events that led up to my incarceration.

Dr. Rhodes reported 'Mr Hood's mental health contacts dramatically increased and it is unclear why this was the case.' "

Although he had clearly stated what caused his initial mental break there was no mention of this in the report.

This is the best mental health Unit in IDOC? I do not believe anyone mental health issues are being addresses by dehumanization and degradation. It gets worse.

Quote

"Inmate hall had smeared feces all over himself and his cell, which was right next to mine. The stink was everywhere and I couldn't eat. A lieutenant sprayed air freshener on some toilet paper for me. A nurse came in

took the air fragrance from the guard and told him that Dr. Rhodes had gotten him and the Lt. in trouble for giving it to me. “

End quote

Tamms is run in such a way that a guard literally got in trouble for a small act of kindness to a fellow human being in a depressing predicament.

Quote

“I didn’t eat or talk to anyone for four days after talking to Dr Rhodes. She labeled me a ruminator. That gave the staff an excuse not to listen to me.”

“...I was going mad like the bugs.” “The bugs were always cutting themselves”

“I was standing at the door of the law library waiting for the nurse to come by. I asked her for Tylenol. She ignored me for around twenty minutes. I pleaded as she went about her business. Finally I exploded; I yelled at her, I yelled over and over. As soon as I got back in my cell I broke down and cried. The next thing I knew I was scratching my arm over the toilet. When I realized what I was doing, I was afraid of myself, for I had never cut myself without thinking to do it before that. That night I couldn’t eat. I was sorry for what I had done and wanted to apologize. I wrote a letter to the nurse saying I was sorry.

I received a disciplinary report written by nurse Schaefer for intimidation or threats. The notes said she had stopped by the library window but I had ignored her. “

“On 11/16/04 officer Hammersly came back laughing with my new spit hood. He had written HOOD on it real big with eyes drawn in the O’s. I thought about killing myself. I made a noose and cut myself before I came to my senses. I never told anyone I did it. I couldn’t take anymore dehumanization.”

“ On 12/6/04 I made a halfhearted attempt to hang myself. Lt. Null had been depriving me of my weekly shave for two months. He would tell the guard not to let me out, then report that I had refused. I looked and felt like a wild animal. I made a sheet rope and tied it as best I could to the light fixture. I put the noose around my neck and jumped. I hung for a second before falling to the floor. I just laid there. The next thing I knew mace was all over my face and body and the tact team was on me. While I was being punched, kneed and kicked I heard someone repeatedly yelling ‘Quit your resisting Hood!’ I wasn’t resisting at all. They documented this as a feigned hanging attempt for secondary gain.”

“On 6/16/05, I was sitting on my bed with a noose around my neck... it gave me some kind of comfort. Officer Johnson told me, ‘you know we’re going to come in on you if I report that noose’. I immediately took the noose apart, I knew of Lt. Null’s M.O. of macing inmates. Null came, and had officers Johnson and Rice with him. I told him I was alright; I had taken the noose apart. I pointed to the strips of sheet and repeated I had taken the noose apart. He told me to get them, I did, and tried to pass them through the door to him. He ordered me to drop, which I immediately did. He kept ordering me to back up. I did. Suddenly the chuck box was snatched off my door and Lt. Null maced me. I heard him say on the radio ‘Code 3! I need 6!’ I got down on the floor so they couldn’t slam me down. Someone overrode his code 3 order and he said ‘you cuffing up?’ I immediately did so. I was taken out of the cell... first to the shower where I was slammed, punched, kicked, and kneed. Next I was taken to the nurses’ station where I was slammed down on a gurney and beaten all over while pinned down. The guards were making sadistic jokes about my big nose. Lt. Null ordered them to crush me with the shield, saying I was spitting. I was begging to breathe. Nurse India Walker came and the abuse stopped. The shield was lifted to allow her to pour solution in my eyes. It was going in my nose and I was choking. Rice told the nurse ‘drown his

ass!' She asked me if I was alright several times, it was obvious that I wasn't but I was afraid they would beat me worse if I said anything.

As soon as she left, Rice rubbed the mace from my back into my eyes and the beating resumed full force. I continued to plead with them. They laughed. Lt. Null told me I was going back to my cell and better lay my ass down and I wasn't getting a shave that night. I was taken to B pod and at some point I heard Lt. Null order 'right there!' I was slammed down and beaten. I was then carried. Lt. Null was screaming about my assaulting his officers. I was put back in the same cell with the blood all over the walls. Instead of taking my shackles off outside the cell Lt. Null told them to do it inside the cell. This was another opportunity to beat me. As they were leaving one of them grabbed my head and slammed it into the wall.

That night officers Rolfe and Crespi came to look at me. Rolfe said he didn't do any of it. He was just there. He'd tell me if he did any of it, he said. Crespi said he was just walking along. 'I didn't even have gloves on. I didn't touch you man.' Both Crespi and Rolfe also witnessed Lt. Null tearing up pictures of my deceased family while shaking down my cell. Both Crespi and Rolfe apologized to me. Later that night officers Wolfe and Kohler were making fun of what happened to me. "

"On 6/23/05 psychologist Rocky Peppers asked 'what's this I hear about your beating your head against the door or floor all night?' I told him I didn't beat my head off anything. He insisted, 'yes you did. It's in the notes. I read it.' I reaffirmed to him that I didn't beat my head and proceeded to show him all my injuries. Both my eyes were black; I had large scrapes on my forehead and face which were swollen and badly bruised. I had knots all over my head. My wrist and ankles were cut deeply from the handcuffs and shackles and there were bruises all over my body. I could barely move. I sent grievances to the grievance officer but they were lost. Mental health has me labeled as a manipulator and they go along with security. I can't take anymore abuse. I no longer desire to live. I'm in constant fear. My back and wrist aren't healing right and Dr. Powers still won't see me..."

End quote

My Brother was sent to IDOC 21 years ago. He was not innocent, he was a young man that had the misfortune of being born into a part of our society where young people are not protected and he bears the scars to show it. But he is a human being.

The inmates at Tamms are repeatedly called the worst of the worst. The signs say if this facility is shut down it is going to cost lives. It would be more accurate to say that the way Tamms is run is the worst of the worst and that the closing of Tamms will actually save lives.

To the Members of the COGFA Commission,

I am writing this letter to strongly OPPOSE the closure of Tamms Correctional Center. I have been a front line supervisor at Tamms CC since it opened in 1998, and know the background and history well. There are several very important points that MUST be very thoughtfully considered before reaching a decision about the future of Tamms CC. Please allow me to discuss some of these points with you. It is my hope that by better understanding the nature of Tamms CC and IDOC, you will agree that Tamms CC plays a vital, irreplaceable role in public safety here in Illinois. Historically, public safety has always been the first and foremost responsibility of any government.

When Tamms CMAX opened in 1998, Illinois still had the death penalty. While I personally do not support capital punishment, the fact was that back then, capital punishment served a vital role as a deterrent to inmates serving life sentences in prison, certainly preventing many violent deaths of inmates and prison staff. Currently, Illinois has no death penalty. This leaves Tamms CMAX as the ONLY deterrent to more violence within the IDOC system statewide. I have been told personally by a convicted murderer who is serving two life sentences that if Tamms is closed, nothing will deter him from killing any staff member or inmate which he chooses. He stated, "What are they going to do, give me *another* life sentence?" To put it bluntly, some of these men are truly evil, and have absolutely no respect for the lives of anybody but themselves. They will kill somebody just for the excitement of it. They have told me so themselves. Several of these inmates proudly admit that Tamms was built for people like them, and they admit Tamms is a necessary, if unpleasant, prison, and that without it, they would just keep on killing, with no other incentive *not* to.

The inmates at Tamms CMAX have been placed here justly, due to their violent or otherwise unmanageable behavior at the very same prisons that the Governor now wants to send them back to. I have to ask, if the other prisons couldn't stop the riots, murders, gang violence, and hostage taking before, what makes the Governor think they can do so now? In an already overcrowded prison, there is no way to properly secure and monitor the few inmates that commit, organize, or lead the most violent activities. At Tamms, inmates' mail is properly scanned. Many times outgoing letters have been intercepted that called for criminal activities to be conducted on the streets of Chicago, Kankakee, Alton, Champaign, or other city in our state. Some letters even contained orders for crimes to be committed in other states around the country. I ask you, what are the chances of those letters being properly searched and intercepted in a prison with 3,500 inmates? Imagine the volume of mail coming in and out of the mail room at Stateville, Pontiac, or Menard. It would be impossible to scan and search every piece of mail. At Tamms, we have the resources and staff available to ensure that mail is thoroughly searched properly, legally, and professionally. Our mail room alone may have prevented an untold numbers of crimes from being committed in the public.

In addition to the extra mail security, at Tamms CMAX each and every inmate's cell and property are thoroughly searched at least monthly. The most problematic inmates are searched more frequently. Again, Tamms has the resources and staffing to allow us to closely monitor the most violent and disruptive inmates in the entire state.

How thoroughly and often would they be searched in a prison where officers also have to search another 3,000 inmates? I can tell you from experience, at Menard CC, in the 1990's, deadly weapons fabricated by and in the possession of inmates were so common, it was a surprise *not* to find at least one while searching a cell. Our main hope was that we found them before they were used against us. It is no coincidence that the number of weapons found in inmates' possession has dropped dramatically since 1998, as the threat of being moved to Tamms has served its purpose- deterring violent conduct in other prisons. Also, all phone calls made by CMAX inmates are known to be monitored, in yet another effort to control crime here and elsewhere. Can you imagine trying to monitor calls of the most dangerous men in Illinois lost in a flood of phone calls by 3,000 other inmates? If Tamms is closed, what would stop the gangs from once again calling out "hits" on rival gang members? Or worse yet, on officers? Don't forget, not all IDOC murder victims were killed *inside* a prison. I have personally had "hits" called out on me, and my brother was stabbed while he was an officer at Stateville CC. Again, this was before Tamms opened and became the most successful management tool IDOC has. The inmates at Tamms are very manipulative, cunning, and in some cases evil individuals. If they are allowed to return to the other prisons, nothing but trouble will follow. Inmate on inmate violence usually leads to gang retaliation and more violence. Gang retaliation then leads to "war" between the gangs involved, and yet more violence. The vicious cycle continues until prison staff themselves are victims for cracking down with rules and procedures aimed at stopping the cycle. This was life working in prison before Tamms opened. We should not allow that situation to ever happen again. Too many people paid with their lives, just doing their jobs as public servants.

Many folks who wish to see Tamms closed cite the fact that it is located so far from Chicago. They claim that the long distances make communication difficult. What may not be known, however, is that while planning the construction and operation of the state's only "supermax" prison, even the physical location was considered as a disincentive to disruptive behavior. Tamms is too far from Chicago for the gang chiefs to be kept up to date on what is going on. They can no longer "call the shots" from inside the walls of a prison. Placing some of these inmates at Pontiac CC will give them more control over their thugs on the streets, increasing violence in the already violence-ridden neighborhoods that our fellow law enforcement officers in Chicago are trying to control.

I have seen several statements from people expressing their concerns over closing the CMAX, but I would like to remind you that Tamms is also home to a 200 bed Minimum Security Unit. This unit has provided countless hours of community service in southern Illinois since 1995, often in our greatest times of need. Some of the valuable services provided include: sandbagging during at least two massive floods, debris cleanup after floods and tornadoes, highway trash removal, public cemetery and park maintenance, and building preservation at historical sites. Tamms MSU inmates have even been trained to be little league baseball officials and were used throughout the area to officiate youth baseball games. These services provided the inmates with job experience, instilled in them a sense of pride and accomplishment, and allowed them to "pay back" to the community for their crimes. The communities in which they serve may not have another viable cost-effective way of providing these services, such as trash pickup and lawn care. It is a win-win situation for the local towns and the inmates alike. Closing the Tamms MSU would take all of this away.

I take exception to the comment made at the hearing by Mr. Brian Nelson, former inmate at Tamms CC. On the local news, Mr. Nelson stated that he “lost hope” for his future while at Tamms. On the contrary, Mr. Nelson prepared for his future, applied himself to education, and used his time at Tamms to earn a paralegal license. I congratulate him on his success and wish him well. Remember, though, that Mr. Nelson did not become a paralegal at Menard, or Pontiac, or Stateville. Mr. Nelson earned his way to Tamms (just like every other inmate must) due to his repeated disruptive activities at other maximum security prisons. It took years at Tamms before Nelson began to genuinely seek self improvement. If Tamms had never opened, what then becomes of his fate? More gang crime, more violence, perhaps an untimely death at the hands of other inmates? It is *because of* Tamms, not *in spite of* it, that Brian Nelson was able to pull himself out of the bottomless pit of crime to become a productive member of society. And, again, I congratulate him. His is a textbook case of what can be done to rehabilitate while in prison, even at supposedly such an isolated and depressing one as Tamms!

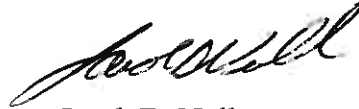
In fact, inmates at Tamms are not isolated at all. That must be the biggest myth about Tamms; that inmates are “locked away 23 hours a day in isolation”. This myth must be debunked. Inmates live on wings with up to nine other inmates. They can easily talk back and forth, even from wing to wing. They regularly play chess and checkers together from inside their own cells. They read the paper, watch TV, and listen to the radio. They work out together. They interact with staff on a near constant basis during the day. Officers, lieutenants, nurses, counselors, chaplains, mental health professionals, all make normal and routine rounds to make contact with the inmates. One could argue that an inmate at Tamms easily receives more one on one time from staff than they would at Menard, Pontiac, or Stateville. Again, because Tamms is designed for this mission, we can do it. We are not trying to make daily contact with 3,000 other inmates!

Thus far, I have asked you to consider Tamms from a security and public safety perspective. Now I would like to take a moment to discuss this from a personal and economic side. Employees from Tamms reside in 16 different Illinois counties. It goes without saying that the economic blow to the communities would be devastating if the employees were laid off or had to relocate. Personally, six people are directly dependent upon my paycheck, including three minor children. Even as a military veteran with a college degree, there is no way I would be able to find another job with comparable pay and benefits in this area. If I was forced to move to another part of the state to keep my job, I would be forced to move away from two of my young children whom I share joint custody with, as they would stay in this area with their mother. My worst nightmare is not getting to see my kids, who are in cub scouts, girl scouts, honor classes, and year-round sports. In either of these two scenarios, everyone loses; my children, the rest of my family, my local businesses, and me. Is this the thanks I get after 26 years of service to my country and my state? And I am only one; multiply the employee economic and emotional toll by more than 300, and the picture becomes much worse. We did not create this financial mess the state is in, and I don’t see why we should be asked to suffer in a terrible and dangerous attempt at fixing it.

In summation, Tamms CC is a vital part of our correctional system. It deters inmates from committing egregious acts of violence at other institutions. Inmates have *earned* their way here, and they will have to *earn* their way out. It is not a nice place to do time; it is not supposed to be. However, it is secure, safe, humane, cost effective, and

constitutional. I hope that you agree with thousands of others like me, that for as long as a small percentage of inmates continue to commit the majority of violent crimes while already in prison, there will continue to be a need for a place like Tamms. It is, indeed, a prison for other prisons.

Very Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jacob D. Null". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "N".

Jacob D. Null
Lieutenant
Tamms CC
(618) 747-2042
April 9, 2012

JEAN MACLEAN SNYDER
LAW OFFICE: JEAN MACLEAN SNYDER

Telephone 773-285-5100

4845 South Kenwood Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60615-2015
jeansnyder@sbcglobal.net

Facsimile 773-285-5101

April 20, 2012

Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability
703 Stratton Office Building
Springfield, IL 62706
facilityclosure@ilga.gov

To members of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability:

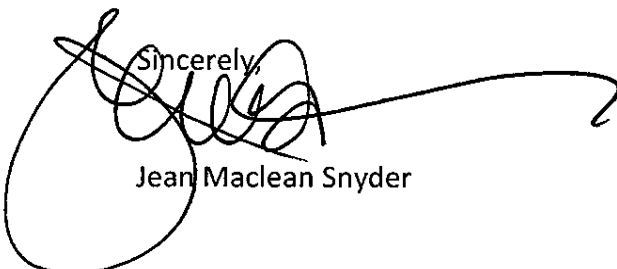
I favor closing Tamms Correctional Center for three reasons:

1. Tamms' supermax was built to be harsh, lonely, and restrictive. It achieved that goal, and then some. Many of the men sent to Tamms are mentally ill or become so during their stay. That's because Tamms' excessively harsh environment causes or exacerbates their mental illnesses, in violation of human rights mandates, constitutional protections, and all common decency. Fourteen years of Tamms is enough. For once, a budget cut makes good policy sense.

2. The argument that Tamms increases public safety has no legitimate support. The opening of Tamms' supermax in 1998 was the last of a series of important reforms instituted when the Department of Corrections reclaimed the prisons from the gangs who had run them. Staff assaults started to decline in 1996 when the first reforms were instituted; the decline simply continued when Tamms opened two years later. Today's security-heavy prison system is a far cry from the out-of-control system that existed in the 1980's and early 90's. Tamms is not needed now, if it ever was.

3. Keeping Tamms open to help the economy in Southern Illinois is a wrong-headed idea. Our State government should employ people based on the legitimate needs of all the people of Illinois. Passing out jobs to satisfy specific constituencies is exactly the kind of action that got us into the serious financial trouble we find ourselves in today. The State does not need an over-staffed supermax in Southern Illinois, particularly not when other prisons are so greatly understaffed. Please, members of CGFA, tell Gov. Quinn that you support his proposal to close this inefficient and harmful prison.

Sincerely,



Jean Maclean Snyder



Office of the State's Attorney Union County, Illinois

TYLER R. EDMONDS
STATE'S ATTORNEY

Union County Courthouse
309 West Market Street, Room 200
Jonesboro, Illinois 62952

Telephone: (618) 833-7216
Facsimile: (618) 833-3349

VIA E-MAIL

April 18, 2012

Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability
Attn: Center Closure
703 Stratton Building
Springfield, Illinois 62706
Centerclosure@ilga.gov

Re: Tamms Correctional Center

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I write to express unequivocal opposition to the closure of the Tamms Correctional Center. Tamms Correctional Center is a vital part of the Illinois Department of Corrections and since its opening has had a dramatic and well-documented impact on inmate and guard safety. Tamms is also a major employer allowing hundreds of hard-working Southern Illinoisans to earn a good wage in a part of Illinois where good jobs are hard to come by.

We all acknowledge that the State's dire financial situation must be addressed. However, the closure of Tamms Correctional Center is not the place to balance the budget – the consequences for public safety and the severe economic blow to Southernmost Illinois are too high a price to pay.

Sincerely,

Tyler R. Edmonds
Union County State's Attorney

TRE/sam



April 16, 2012

Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability
Attn: Facility Closure
703 Stratten bldg..
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Commission,

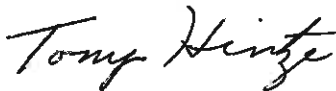
I am writing in support of Governor Quinn's proposal to close the Illinois supermax prison at Tamms, Illinois.

There are many reasons to close Tamms. First and foremost, it is a terribly inhumane institution. Men are subjected to nearly total sensory deprivation and are deprived of all human contact. Experts in both psychiatry and penology have long held that such treatment is akin to torture. Many of the men who are sent to Tamms are already mentally ill. Others develop mental illness while confined within the tiny enclosure of concrete walls that keep each of them isolated. There have been many mental breakdowns, self-mutilations and suicide attempts at Tamms. Human rights organizations have condemned it. There is simply no justification for treating one's fellow man like this. Our state would be well served to close Tamms.

Human Rights is the main reason for closing Tamms, but there are other strictly practical reasons as well. The national trend is to close supermax prisons and reduce the use of segregation because alternatives are cheaper and more effective. Tamms is by far the most expensive prison in Illinois to maintain. The state pays approximately \$90,000 per year for each man kept in isolation at Tamms. Moving only these 184 to Pontiac and Menard will save the state \$26.6 million dollars. As you know, this money is much needed for many other programs in Illinois. Saving \$26.6 million could also prevent cutting back on some other needed service by that same amount.

Please don't lose this opportunity to close this repressive institution.

Tony Hintze
1718 W. Albion #2b
Chicago, IL 60626
773-761-6981



Closing Tamms is Necessary and Inevitable

WE CAN'T AFFORD TO KEEP TAMMS SUPERMAX OPEN

IT'S INEFFICIENT: The supermax was designed for 500 men, but holds about 184. The boot camp has about 199.

IT'S REDUNDANT: We already have an all-segregation prison—Pontiac.

IT'S EXPENSIVE: It is the most expensive adult prison per capita. We pay over \$90,000¹ per year to keep a man in isolation at the supermax — four times the Department average of \$21,405.

IT DRIVES UP IDOC MENTAL HEALTH COSTS: The use of isolation requires a large number of suicide crisis cells and constant mental health monitoring² because it induces and exacerbates serious psychiatric problems. Therefore, we pay millions to treat the effects of isolation. But it doesn't work. You can't treat someone for 30 minutes a week, and make them worse for 24 hours a day. We also pay outside medical providers for injuries from suicide attempts and self-mutilation (e.g., deep wounds, swallowing foreign objects, coma).

CLOSURE IS A SMART PLAN

HUGE SAVINGS: Moving just 184 men from the supermax to vacant cells at Pontiac will allow the state to redirect \$26.6 million dollars.

MINIMAL JOB LOSS: The IDOC plan is to shift 118 of the 302 Tamms employees to under-staffed prisons within 90 miles. Filling these vacancies would save millions in overtime and make the system safer and more functional. The remaining 184 employees could fill other open prison jobs and save even more in overtime. Most Illinois prisons are desperately searching for more staff to operate properly.

MEN AT TAMMS HAVE BEEN OVERCLASSIFIED FOR YEARS: Most of the 184 men at Tamms are no different from the population at other maximum-security prisons. Hundreds have been transferred from Tamms (at least 60 in the last 3 years) and some even end up in medium-security prisons.³ The IDOC director has estimated that only about 25 men at Tamms are truly dangerous.⁴

MAXIMUM SECURITY: The IDOC says that safety comes from professional correctional policies, not location. That said, men transferred from Tamms will be securely housed on former death rows in Menard and Pontiac. Death row prisoners have never been housed at Tamms.

The Illinois prison system has been completely transformed from the gang-dominated IDOC of the 1980s through mid-1990s. Security is under control. The dangers now come from overcrowding and underfunding. Tamms takes a lot of money that is needed elsewhere.

¹ This estimate is from the 2009 exposé on Tamms by the *Belleville News Democrat*. The IDOC's per capita estimate of \$64,805 represents an average of the cost of the supermax with the adjacent boot camp.

² The ratio of mental health workers to prisoners at Tamms is 1 to 35, compared to 1 to 589 at Pontiac or 1 to 1765 at Menard. These statistics are from the IDOC's 2009 10-Point Plan to reform Tamms supermax.

³ Men who spent years in Tamms are now in Hill, Big Muddy, Danville, Illinois River, Lawrence, Western, and Pickneyville Correctional Centers.

⁴ In 2009, an exposé by the *Belleville News Democrat* found that more than half the men at Tamms were never charged with a crime in a regular prison. The IDOC has been in a lawsuit for the last ten years about this issue. In 2010 a federal district judge found that all prisoners at Tamms were sent there in violation of their 14th amendment right to due process. Many did not know why they were sent there and had no meaningful way to appeal their placement. It was found that some men had been sent there strictly in retaliation for filing grievances.

CLOSING TAMMS WILL IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY

BETTER OUTCOMES FOR COMMUNITIES: Hundreds of men from Tamms have completed their sentences and come back to society—all the worse for their years in Tamms. Isolation causes despair, hopelessness and rage, worsens behavior, causes lasting mental health problems, undermines successful reentry and increases the risk of recidivism. Some 40% of those men currently at Tamms will be returned to our communities within the next 20 years. We want them to come back intact—not mentally impaired.

BETTER OUTCOMES INSIDE PRISON: There is no proof that supermax prisons reduce assaults or violence in prison. There is some evidence that they increase it. The national trend is to close supermaxes and reduce the use of segregation in order to save money, reduce violence and reinvest scarce resources.⁵

CLOSING TAMMS IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO

- As a consequence of the isolation, suicide attempts, self-mutilation, hallucinations and the smearing of feces are widespread at Tamms. Such breakdowns occur in otherwise healthy men. This is bad policy and it offends basic decency.
- Federal Judge G. Patrick Murphy ruled in 2010 that incarceration at Tamms constitutes sensory deprivation and inflicts mental injury upon prisoners that lasts long after they are transferred back to other facilities.
- Every man is held in solitary confinement with no communal activities. They never leave their cells except to shower or exercise alone in a walled concrete pen (between 1 and 7 times per week). Over half of the pen, there is a wire-mesh roof. This is the only access that men have to the outdoors.
- There is no penological justification for placing anyone in extended isolation. For those with a severe mental illness, it is unconscionable. Such placement has been determined by federal courts to be a violation of the 8th amendment prohibition on “cruel and unusual punishment” and it has made Tamms the target of even more litigation.
- Tamms has become a dumping ground for people with mental illnesses. Many men were sent there for disruptive behavior brought on by psychiatric problems. It is a vicious cycle. The longer a man is held in solitary, the more abnormal his behavior becomes, and he is punished with more time in solitary. We need to break the cycle and spend the money on treatment.
- The U.N. Committee Against Torture considers such imprisonment to be cruel, inhuman and degrading, and when the isolation is indefinite — as at Tamms — to be a form of torture. Last year, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on torture Juan E. Méndez called for a global ban on solitary confinement in excess of 15 days.
- The effects of isolation at Tamms were the subject of a 2009 award-winning investigative series by the *Belleville News-Democrat* and included in a *New Yorker Magazine* article (“Hellhole,” March 30, 2009). In 2012, Tamms prisoners were featured in the *Dart Society Reports* multimedia project “The Gray Box,” about the lasting trauma of solitary confinement. For years, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have issued public statements about human rights abuses at Tamms. The whole world is watching.

⁵ Mississippi closed its supermax in 2010. They saved money and reduced violence at the same time. In 2011, Maine all but ended the use of solitary at its notorious supermax with great results. They invested that savings in mental health treatment. Colorado opened a new supermax 18 months ago and has just decided to close it!

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

Commission on Gov. Forecasting Accountability.
Attn. Facility closure.

MY NAME IS JOHN SPIRES A60491

I'M AN INMATE AT THE TAMMS CORRECTIONAL CENTER

I WAS SENT TO TAMMS IN 2006 FOR TAKING
A FEMALE EMPLOYEE HOSTAGE AND SEXUALLY
ASSAULTING HER.

IF YOU CLOSE TAMMS THERES GOING TO BE
MURDERS AND ALL KINDS OF ASSAULTS. THE
RUMOR IS ALREADY THAT THERES GOING TO BE
HITS ON BOTH OFFICERS AND INMATES IF TAMMS
CLOSES.

TO PUT ME BACK IN A REGULAR PRISON
SETTING THE ~~SAFETY~~^{SAFETY} OF OTHERS AND TO MYSELF
WOULD BE IN DANGER. I DON'T TRUST MYSELF
ANY MORE AND IF I DO SOMETHING TO
HURT SOMEONE ELSE OR IF I'M HURT IN ANY
WAY I'M GOING TO SUE THE STATE IF EITHER
ONE HAPPENS AND IF I CAN'T SUE I'VE ALREADY
TOLD MY SISTER SHARON BANNER TO SUE
BECAUSE THE STATE IS PUTTING BOTH OTHERS
AND MYSELF IN DANGER IF THEY CLOSE TAMM
A PLACE LIKE TAMMS IS NEEDED. JUST LOOK
AT ALL THE MAX JOINTS, (STATEVILLE, PONTIAC
AND MENARD) ARE ALL IN UPROAR BECAUSE
TAMMS MAY BE CLOSING AND THEY KNOW THERES
NOTHING THAT CAN BE DONE TO THEM IF TAMM

CLOSES SO WHAT DO THEY HAVE TO FEAR
OR LOSE IF AN OFFICER OR INMATE IS
KILLED OR HURT. THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICER
DEATHS SINCE TAMMS OPENED AND NOW YOU
WANT TO PUT ALL THESE MURDERS AND
ASSAULTERS BACK AMONG REGULAR
POPULATION. DONT YOU REMEMBER WHY YOU
OPENED TAMMS TO BEGIN WITH. GOVERNOR
QUINN OR THE DIRECTOR CANT BE THAT
STUPID. THEY HAVE TO KNOW WHATS GOING
TO HAPPEN IF THEY CLOSE TAMMS AND PUT
US ALL BACK IN THE MAX JOINTS.

A LOT OF LIES HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN
TRYING TO CLOSE TAMMS. THERE ARE NO BARS
HERE OR NIGHTSTICKS SO HOW IS IT EVEN
POSSIBLE FOR THE OFFICERS TO BEAT ON THE BARS
WITH NIGHTSTICKS JUST TO KEEP INMATES
AWAKE. THERE ARE VIDEO CAMERAS ON EVERY
POD THAT MONITOR OUTSIDE ALL THE CELL DOORS
SO ITS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY OFFICER TO ABUSE
ANY INMATE. THESE CAMERAS ARE ON 24 HOURS A DAY.
THIS IS JUST A WARNING, CLOSE TAMMS TO
SAVE MONEY AND PUT EVERYONE LIFE IN
JEOPARDY. I FOR ONE NEED TO BE IN A PLACE
LIKE TAMMS FOR THE SAFETY OF OTHERS OR TO
MYSELF. DONT CLOSE TAMMS.

John Spier A60491

I am opposed to the closure of Tamms Supermax. I listened to the claims that the offenders at the Tamms Supermax are mistreated, funny thing is they get better healthcare, mental health treatment and have a better living facility (i.e. air conditioning and heat) than many elderly who have not committed hanus crimes against society. So many are worried about the care of individuals who did not care about others when they were free in society and chose to take away their freedoms by murder, rape etc. Then while in prison broke prison rules and chose to assault and/or murder other inmates or staff. When did wrong become right? When did we start rewarding the criminal and punishing the victims?

Tony Jackson
Concerned Citizen of Illinois

If Tamms has an annual operating cost of \$26.1 million dollars, then to save this amount you would have to:

1. Release all of the Cmax & MSU inmates housed at Tamms
2. Layoff all employees at Tamms
3. Turn the lights off, lock the front door, and walk away from the unpaid for buidling

However, if the Cmax & MSU inmates are not set free, and are to be transferred and house elsewhere (Pontiac & another minimum security facility); and 118 of the 302 Tamms jobs are to be kept by moving Tamms staff elsewhere within 90 miles; then the actual state budget savings is not even close to 26.1 million dollars. \$10 million dollars is closer, and probably still inflated.

186 Tamms CMAX inmates X \$31,712 per inmate = \$5,898,432 (if housed at Pontiac)

196 Tamms MSU inmates X \$21,000 per inmate = \$4,116,000 (housed at any other level 7 facility)

118 jobs kept X atl least \$55,000 per job = \$6,490,000 (this number will be higher due to the 118 are the most senior and top paid employees in the Tamms system)

Estimated annual cost to maintain the building and grounds if closed = \$225,000

Cost of unpaid morage on the Tamms facility = ?

With these numbers the cost of housing Tamms inmates elsewhere, and keeping 118 Tamms staff working elsewhere within 90 miles, you still spend \$16,729,432; thus cutting \$9.37 million out of ther budget, not \$26.1 million.

Are these numbers good enough for the state to close its only pressure release valve in its over-populated inmate system.

Thanks for your time

Brad Hoehner

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing in support of closing Tamms. I want you to know that I am concerned about the well-being of correctional officers. As long as we have prisons, I do not want the people who work in them to be attacked or terrorized. But for a number of reasons, I do not believe that Tamms is not actually necessary for the overall management of the Illinois prison system. As you know, the Illinois Department of Corrections themselves have made this argument in recent months, and no one knows better than they do what the system capacities are, and what the prisoners inside Tamms are. If they are saying they don't need Tamms, it seems pretty convincing.

As you know, the prison is expensive. But I wanted to point your attention to the Belleville News Democrat's calculation of the actual cost of Tamms, in case someone else has not done so; the \$64,000 per prisoner per year figure that has been repeatedly quoted as the prison's cost is average of the cost of the minimum security part of Tamms with the supermax part. The Belleville News Democrat's investigation says that it is \$90,000 per prisoner per year to run Tamms.

The prison is also impractical in that it is counter-productive: it actually damages prisoners' mental and social abilities, making them less able to get along with others, should they be released into society or into the general population of another prison. As you know, many of them will be released eventually. Meanwhile, there is no evidence that Tamms is responsible for the decrease in overall violence in the prison population since the "bad old days" of the early 90's.

I know the harm that is done to prisoners in long-term solitary confinement is difficult to prove and to see. But I beg you to imagine for a moment that it is real. There are many credible parties who argue that it is real. The social and mental deterioration that occurs when humans don't have interactions with others is well-documented going back to the 1950's, in studies of astronauts, monkeys, and torture interrogation techniques. Prisoners at Guantanamo were kept in solitary confinement for weeks as part of their preparation for interrogation, because we know that isolation makes people psychologically vulnerable. And as you know, other states have come to the conclusion that prolonged isolation damages their correctional goals.

If long-term solitary confinement is counter-productive and expensive, and if there are humane alternatives, we should cut our losses on this expensive and misguided experiment in corrections.

Thank you,

Nadya Pittendrigh

In my opinion, the governor's recommendation to close Tamms Supermax is a right one. Having resided in that area of Illinois through my teenage years and having family still in that area, it is comprehensible why some do not desire the prison to close with inmates as well as employees being transferred elsewhere. Despite being located in an extreme poverty zone, some people like residing there and do not desire to re-locate. The Supermax has resulted in jobs for a few, with much of the revenue/income from those, it is reasonable to guess, having been spent in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, over the years. Having family who are employed at the Supermax, Choate Mental Health, Tri-County Detention Center, etc in that region, it is a fact of life that there simply aren't enough jobs so that everyone who is unemployed there can obtain employment without re-locating. In addition, there have been very few other new businesses which have opened since the Supermax was located in Tamms. The town of Tamms, as I recall, had several businesses back in the 1960's and 70's, including doctor's office, general merchandise store, florist, grocery store, beauty parlor, repair garages, gas stations, used car dealership, drugstore, restaurant, tavern, feed and grain store, etc etc....Today, it has very few businesses other than the Supermax.

Nevertheless, I do think that the governor is correct to appraise the situation and budget concerns from a state wide perspective. \$60,000-\$90,000 per inmate per year is quite a bit to expect Illinois taxpayers, including business owners, to finance, especially when the same inmates could be housed, separately if need be, at other facilities at less cost and tax dollars used to finance the salaries and pension plans of state employees as well as social service programs, programs for the elderly, programs for the impoverished, programs for farmers and programs for new business development that numerous citizens of Southern Illinois desperately need and rely upon. The myth that Tamms houses the "worst of the worst" simply does not hold water or justify its cost, both to taxpayers and inmates. There have been multiple lawsuits filed due to supposed conditions at the Supermax, including those pertaining to medical practices that, by most standards, could be described as "primitive". It has been reported that more than a few housed at Tamms are technically mentally ill and others have implied they have been denied inexpensive medical needs, such as a truss for a hernia condition or an aspirin for pain relief, as well as somewhat more costly needs, such as anesthesia while undergoing stitches. Such lawsuits, even if lost by inmates, cost Illinois taxpayers due to the fact that they use up the court's time as well as to the fact that attorneys must be paid, win or lose. The Supermax has been in operation for several years now and has had that time to improve conditions so that such basic matters are not left unaddressed, especially since the state has been using tax dollars to fund its operation, including employee salaries.

Simply put, at a time when incarceration of teens and adults far exceeds education of young children in terms of priority and limited funding has necessitated that the governor review current spending, I do not think other programs, including rehabilitation programs for inmates, should be cut so as to keep the Supermax in operation. While it is true that individuals in that area do need employment, it might be more practical to fund new businesses and farm programs in that area rather than finance Missouri economy and commerce at the expense of Illinois taxpayers.

Wilma Jean Kindle

From: C/O Jason A. Brooks, Tamms Closed Maximum Security
Correctional Center {TCMSCC}, Tamms, IL

To: Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability
{COGFA} and TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Subj: Proposed closure of the TCMSCC facility; REBUTTAL of some
information concerning

Ref: {a} 25 ILCS 155
{b} ACLU Written Statement Re: Tamms of 2 Apr 2012
{c} PhD Grassian/Haney/Kupers COGFA comments of 2 Apr 2012
{d} MHA of Illinois Schoenberg ltr of 30 Mar 2012
{e} JHA of Illinois {undated} ltr to COGFA

1. A SuperMax penitentiary is generally configured as a free-standing distinct unit or a separate unit within another facility that provides for the management and secure control of inmates officially designated as exhibiting violent or serious and disruptive behavior while incarcerated. One generally can't be relegated to a "SuperMax" from the street. Such inmates are a threat to safety and security in traditional high-security facilities. It has been concluded that their conduct can be controlled only by separation, restricted movement, and limited direct access to staff and other inmates.

2. Inmates in these facilities generally are handcuffed or further restrained during any contact with staff. They eat and go to recreation individually, are confined to their cells for up to 23 hours a day, receive one-on-one or individual-based programming (self-study courses, staff visits), have only non-contact visitation privileges, and are supervised more closely and by more staff than inmates in general-population facilities. As Hershberger (1998:54) has written: "These facilities are designed to hold the most violent, disruptive or escape-prone offenders. By isolating the "worst of the worst," these facilities increase the safety of staff, other inmates and the general public. They also allow inmates in other institutions to live in a more normalized prison environment, with greater freedom of movement and access to educational, vocational and other correctional programs." History has revealed beyond doubt that there is a justified reason for TCMSCC and similar institutions to exist all across this country.

3. Subject proposed closure of the *Tamms Closed Maximum Security Correctional Center* {colloquially referred to as the Tamms Supermax} was initially and legally promulgated on 22 Feb 2012 and recommended in the affirmative on 22 Mar 2012. Both notifications were published by Department of Corrections Director S. A. Godinez and were supported in fact and fallacy by the American Civil Liberties Union {ACLU; encompassing the ACLU National Prison Project}, Illinois Representative Patricia Bellock, a clump of PhDs generally of the liberal psycho-social persuasion such as those who are known to sell their "expert testimony" talents to the highest bidder and a number of other individuals.

4. Within these loquacious submissions so extensively argued in support of the immediate or eventual closure of subject facility lie widespread bodies of persistent and relentless material facts that are being utterly disregarded. These truths so often overlooked are wholly or substantially supported partially through several-hundred man-years of staff experience evoking cascades of coherent testimony from the people actually working the C-MAX trenches. These many authentic descriptions and other evidence of

the tangible day-to-day operation of TCMSCC were by and large ignorantly or intentionally ignored or distorted to almost an illicit and certainly an amoral degree by the above-referenced authorities. The eventual ramifications of a deliberate deceit of this caliber are unknown.

5. The many potential victims of this issue are rife with vulnerability and risk. They include everyone from hundreds of employees spending every work day at this facility to the general public and others. Such gratuitous and wanton exposure applies as well to convicted and confined human beings under our responsibility here and elsewhere. The reality of convicted felons casually presenting their direct physical and other threats against loyal employees of a beleaguered department plagued for years by corruption, greed, fraud and vice {culminating several times in the incarceration of those even at the very top of the correctional food chain} must indeed be candidly portrayed to and knowledgably appreciated among all the indispensable parties who support the motion to terminate as well as those most negatively impacted by such closure. The central premise basically worn out by the proponents of subject closure constitutes a complete *fallacy, fabrication and deceit* and as such has been the main prompt for my submission of this LETTER OF REBUTTAL regarding much of the contents of the submissions gathered within References {b}, {c}, {d}, and {e}.

6. My experience in a SuperMax penitentiary encompasses more than that of any other employee at TCMSCC. Assignments within the SuperMax corrections industry in two states comprise the only hourly jobs that I have ever worked as an adult. In every other case I have owned the company and was the CEO and employer of up to sixteen individuals. These enterprises ranged from an advertising agency to a music publishing business to a construction company to a real estate brokerage and more, often simultaneously. Within a decade the destruction emanating from two financially-disastrous divorces tumbled my life from the pinnacle of a virtual empire to the point where I stand today, but it's safe to say that I am still the same person. For three years in Tennessee I was the Correction Clerical Officer for Riverbend Maximum Security Institution {RMSI}, Nashville's own version of the Tamms SuperMax. During that period of time I received only perfect scores on every semi-annual evaluation and was nominated as state-wide Employee of the Year with a two page write-up just before relocating to Illinois.

7. All of my life I have worked as hard as I possibly could to ensure that my production, whatever it may be, was to my own standards. For more than four years I was the sole TCMSCC Infirmary Officer on 3-to-11, logging the entire time with only one drop of blood reaching the floor during my shift, a record not equaled before or since. For my first two years on days I was assigned to the TCMSCC Special Treatment Unit {STU} in J-Pod as First Officer during which time not a single negative incident attributable to my own behavior occurred at that duty station. These two assignments have perpetually been viewed by some line staff as the most attractive places to work on a daily basis and have generally been "changed-out" with fresh officers every three months or so. My long-term occupancy at both of the above-stated duty stations unavoidably estranged some of the officers and supervisory staff with whom I worked. I was demoted from J-pod nine months ago for reasons not related to my professionalism. I believe, however, that I have accomplished goals of supporting the Mission Statement of this institution and insuring a tight personal worksite {especially considering my unique direct familiarity with another state's policies and procedures} and am exceptionally qualified to present what I believe to be my herein-submitted objective and equitable testimony to COGFA and other interested persons and entities from a position of deep awareness of the actual inner-workings of key components of this institution and the majority of its many passengers and crew.

8. Perhaps my turning sixty-five years old in a few months {possibly the oldest C/O remaining at TCMSCC} imparts a level of experience and conviction that many may not embrace. Every year on this planet I was taught or learned on my own that nothing is free, everything takes a lot of personal effort and solid, in-depth consideration. My father was a celebrated WWII fighter pilot {P-38s and P-51s in the South Pacific} who among many other things gave close fighter support during the Hiroshima horror, later becoming a building engineer and published writer. My mother raised six kids then began anew as an architectural draftsman {Magna Cum Laude} and published writer. They never let any of us forget that we had a contribution to make in this life to ourselves and to others. I've tried each day to live up to their expectations, including my disproportionate efforts at every duty station to which I have been assigned at the Tamms SuperMax. My five years aboard nuclear FBM submarines occurred during my most formative years and was instrumental in fostering my natural propensity to keep accurate records of daily events, some of which are stored in my basement and go back forty years.

9. We all can vouch for the fact that TCMSCC contains and nurtures the "worst of the worst" criminals in this state. This is obvious considering their established personalities, their threat potential or both. These guys display more pronounced disciplinary problems and more evident social malfunctions than most of the open-population inmates statewide. Many of them are gang-leaders, gang henchmen, serious staff-assaulters, or, as is common, have severely injured or killed their former roommates or another convict. Universally cunning and calculating to an extent seldom encountered outside of a max prison, some even embody the propensity to cause themselves grave physical damage. Many are considered to be a probable source of substantial attacks against staff or other persons on a daily basis at this or any other correctional facility.

10. Resolute in their quest to be the center of attention both locally and possibly outside the walls of TCMSCC whenever they can manage a trip to an outside hospital, the scheming and calculating "cutters" scattered sparsely among our inmates are the best examples of manipulation-at-any-cost that has ever presented itself in my memory. On just about every occasion during which a newspaper reporter visits TCMSCC he or she will interview inmates housed in the STU. Most of the self-mutilators wind up in J-Pod for enrollment in what have historically been quite successful intensive psychological evaluation and treatment regimens. Being positively singled out by liberals-with-agendas {particularly so-called journalists of several ilk} as a reward for their outrageously-destructive behavior has the consequence of socially-condoning such mayhem and imparts to some of them a real thirst for further bonus attention and opportunity to instigate bad press outside these walls. Such classic positive-reinforcement-for-negative-behavior approach and its aftermath inundate the viewpoint of many adversaries of this facility and often are instrumental in inflaming the incumbent laissez-faire blocs who have been intent on closing this institution since its inception.

11. It's been written that any prison environment "brings out the worst in everyone..." and it's known that stress levels generate, for one thing, a suicide rate among prison guards *thirty-nine percent* higher than that typically measured for other occupations. Even under these trying conditions there have always been some very good, straightforward, and trustworthy officers, supervisory and command staff at this institution. Adept at their respective assignments and generally good people, I am glad to have been able to work with many of these individuals for this past thirteen years or so. Operation of a SuperMax penitentiary at the very best is an extremely burdensome, onerous and complicated job, very often entirely

misunderstood by the public. Considering that we usually are in service with something close to a hundred fewer personnel than we started with in 1998, the current staff shows remarkable proficiency and perseverance to continue to get the arduous work done to the high professional standard often in evidence every single work day.

12. Throughout much of the Midwest some news reporters, elite figures in our State government, many of the referenced individuals herein and others have publically contended that what we do at this institution as we discharge the everyday duties of our Mission Statement is not a positive thing. Some argue that our activities here constitute human rights violations. There is an ongoing barrage of remarkably uninformed media and other broadsides aimed at TCMSCC that are disturbing as much for their inaccuracy as for their inflammatory content. We necessarily enroll the most disorderly, aggressive and challenging convicted felons to be found in Illinois {and even some other states} and unavoidably confine their activities to the extent that will ensure their own and other's safety. A recent Supreme Court decision succinctly concluded that a prison's "...first obligation must be to ensure the safety of guards and prison personnel, the public, and prisoners themselves..." Inmates at Tamms have a confirmed history of failure to conform to the requirements of any general prison population and are often blatant members of various vicious Security Threat Groups. These people have *earned* their way into the constrained lifestyle inevitably prevalent at the Tamms SuperMax. Considering the methods they employed to get here and their comportment while housed here, most of them have little valid complaint about their living conditions.

13. Over the past several years a great deal of provocative nonsense has been promulgated in local and national news media counter-argumentative to the feasible existence of institutions such as TCMSCC. These flawed and offensive pronouncements often include but are certainly not limited to assertions that:

- SuperMax confinement is "inhuman and soul-destroying."
- SuperMax inmates have "absolutely no human contact."
- Tamms CMAX is filled with stories of inmates driven mad by prolonged solitary confinement.
- Conditions at Tamms CMAX are designed to and do cause psychological damage.
- Mentally ill prisoners have been left covered in feces for days; others have had to drink toilet water during hot summer months because there is no other drinking water; still others have lived in cells that corrections experts have labeled "medieval."
- The subjection of human beings to long-term solitary confinement and sensory deprivation constitutes torture.
- Treatment of prisoners with mental illnesses include various forms of physical abuse, beatings and pepper spray as well as being deprived of water and clothing.
- SuperMax prisoners describe experiences of anxiety, rage, dissociation, and psychosis.
- The State is sending inmates to Tamms CMAX to justify the expense of an institution that isn't needed.

Every one of these statements and many more published in various media is questionable at best and patently false in many cases, a deception usually prompted by some hidden agenda of the reporting party. Most of them are arguments extolled by defense attorneys for obvious reasons, by "expert witnesses" for money as well as self-serving news reporters in order to hack out a sensational story and for their own aggrandizement.

14. Speaking specifically of TCMSCC, I do not know of an instance when anybody at this institution intentionally "designed conditions to cause psychological damage" to any inmate. That is absurd. Most members of our Mental Health Department {as well as other employees} have displayed an ideal blend of firmness and consideration that I have personally witnessed and generally applauded. It may be true that CMAX inmates present experiences of anxiety, rage, dissociation, and psychosis to psychologists, news reporters and toward other outlets that might assume these reported damages are premeditated and deliberate on the part of TCMSCC personnel. In my direct observation, however, and based on over six continuous years of daily duty within the mental health segments of this institution, the TCMSCC Mental Health staff has, with impressive professional objectivism and personalized attention, mended countless psychological and intellectual wounds affecting inmates whom most of us assumed would be chronic for the rest of their lives. This is what the mental health staff has chosen to accomplish as their day by day vocation and they do it very well. I have worked intimately with many of these professionals and their assigned inmates both at J-Pod and in the Infirmary and I know these remarkable practitioners do the best they can with every inmate simply as a matter of course.

15. The general morale of the inmates at TCMSCC, in my belief and based on my more than sixteen years of experience as a SuperMax employee both in Illinois and in Tennessee, is about as positive as could be expected under the circumstances of their self-inflicted controlled confinement. Any period of incarceration is stressful and psycho-traumatic to an elevated degree compared to just about any other residential situation. Choices these men have made have led them inexorably to this particular SuperMax. The contention that they are enduring inhuman and "soul-destroying" conditions is rubbish. Our inmates have a well-maintained, high-quality, air-conditioned {unique statewide}, well-lighted, clean and secure place with access to television and radio entertainment, a plethora of reading material of their choice presented at their door upon request, some pretty good food almost all of the time, a well-trained and capable staff at their disposal, visiting privileges when earned, and absolute physical safety at all times. Compared to the other SuperMax in which I worked as well as many other similar sites that I have studied over the years, the Tamms inmates have few grievances worthy of serious deliberation.

16. The single most pervasive sham promoted by the anti-Tamms conglomerate is that these inmates have "absolutely no human contact" with anybody during their horrible "solitary confinement" at this facility. This, again, is an entirely ludicrous assertion and the most flagrant example of a professionally-promoted hoax in which I can remember being personally involved. The ACLU's feeble measurement of the policies and procedures of TCMSCC against "undisputed" historical sites and situations, as conjured up by, for instance, author Charles Dickens in 1842 or via an 1890 Supreme Court decision or a situation encountered in the 1940s is pathetic and laughable were it not their usual stance exhibited against the provable reality of such a serious topic. We may logically conclude that these self-deemed enforcers of civil liberties in the face of alleged calamity are themselves engaged in a systematic and officially-sanctioned campaign of misinformation and disinformation possibly leading to a disastrous finale.

17. TCMSCC does not as a matter of policy or procedure eliminate sight, sound, or perceptual stimulation from any inmate. Human beings have autonomic control of five important senses. The only one of which we "deprive" these convicts is the sense of *touch!* I submit to the members of this Commission and others that it might be a good bet the vast majority of inmates are quite content to say the very least that they are not being touched or in substantial jeopardy from physically-aggressive or predatory cell-mates. Due to the inherent design of this institution *we couldn't create an atmosphere of **solitary confinement** if we desperately tried to do so!* The disingenuous term "solitary confinement" was repeated more than thirty

times within the submissions of the above-referenced individuals in a manner likely designed to condition readers of their harangues to accept their propaganda as gospel.

18. The absolute truth relative to "solitary confinement" is that in every housing unit, around the clock twenty-four hours a day, the assigned Pod Floor Officer is required to view and verify the condition of every inmate subject to his daily responsibility *at least* once every half-hour. We make a log entry to that effect on every round {documentation that is reviewed by the Zone Lt. twice each shift}. There are many more additional scheduled and unscheduled connections between inmates and officers throughout the day which can bring to dozens the number of contacts inmates have with "other people" on a daily basis during their "solitary confinement." In many cases inmates will of their own volition interact with the officer during these rounds or the officer may initiate verbal communication to determine the physical or psychological status or needs of an inmate. Not once over these sixteen years have I noted any convict presenting a noticeable "stupor" or suffering from "hallucinations" or any of the many reported ramifications of "solitary confinement" as described within the anti-Tamms literature. We were all trained at the Academy to recognize and deal with any degree of anomalous behavior at least until a member of the psychology or medical department could be summoned to the scene. On the few occasions over the years when any of us may have recognized an inmate in psychological distress we would simply perform the required duties as a matter of course, the spirit and intent of the term "solitary confinement" never even entering our discourse.

19. Solitary confinement? As in any other society, most all of the inmates at TCMSCC normally manage several hours of human interaction among themselves every day, quite to the contrary of the rampant misinformation regarding the subject. There are chess tournaments, checkers games, Scrabble games, interactive physical exercise events, deep personal conversations of every type among inmates as well as officer-to-inmate or amongst inmates on many occasions and good-natured chiding or even outright arguments and hostilities between the inmates themselves should they deem it necessary to blow off accumulated pressures of confinement. While stationed in the Infirmary for those four-and-a-half years as well as in the STU, as daily records will show, I have often found it essential to spend *several hours* of any given shift interacting with from one to five or more difficult inmates on any of many possible subjects. This is done as a matter of routine and as taught at the academy. I generally attempt to help forestall their further emotional degeneration while at my duty station and have had positive results from my additional efforts to calm extremely aggressive individuals. Many of us just take this as part of our job.

20. Solitary confinement? Throughout the year some of the most energetic, animated crowds imaginable {at least in a SuperMax setting} are to be found among the inmates during, for instance, the Final Four games or the Super Bowl broadcasts or most any other major sports feature on television. We generally do not try to stifle their exuberance toward these significant functions unless things seem to be getting too boisterous. These people are *interacting* with one another, actually enjoying each other's company, just as in any other social situation where mutual interests are openly displayed and celebrated. They very often are seen to be having a really *good time* under the circumstances of their decidedly non-solitary confinement. Most of us just let them go at it to a reasonable extent, knowing that the steam they release at these events won't become a future source of difficulty.

21. Just to further beleaguer this point to a near-humorous degree: for the past three or four days at TCMSCC {not the only time things of this sort have occurred} there has been an organized religious "revival" staged for a number of our "SuperMax" inmates that has included something over a dozen civilians gaining access to this facility festooned with accessories including but not limited to guitars, music supplies, charts, gospel material, and *three-hundred dozen cookies of every stripe* through which the convicts were allowed to pick and choose whatever they wanted at any time during this get-together.

Several of these inmates were of the "extreme high-risk" category. They were *removed from their cells* and were restrained in individual close-set chairs on a single wing together, where they loudly sang "Amazing Grace" and dozens of other hymns and were provided tankard after tankard of brewed coffee and lemonade to accompany their cookie feast while the revival progressed. Dietary staff were available to provide these supplies as needed. The once sacrosanct theory of "non-contact" of inmates at this institution was discarded as these guys were prayed with among the civilians who were seen to place their arms around the convicts shoulders or necks in order to, I assume, show their completed forgiveness for them or whatever the case may have been as the prayers progressed. The "solitary confinement" argument, it appears to me, totally falls flat considering the proliferation of this kind of tolerance at what many continue to deem the "worst place in the world."

22. These guys are *not* deprived of human contact even approaching the extent broadcast by the aforesaid hidden-agenda people and therefore most or all of the anomalies so flagrantly attributed to their living in *solitary confinement* could *not possibly* apply to the inmates at Tamms Closed Maximum Security Correctional Center. Yes, our inmates have extraordinary constraints; they cannot touch each other and infrequently see one another throughout the day for up-close visual communication {although this happens briefly almost daily in one manner or another considering their solo trips to the showers and yard or for moves or shakedowns or whatever} but they make the best of it among themselves, as is human nature in every closed culture. They manage very well with what they've got, and any officer on this staff would probably recount the same phenomena.

23. Public news media proclamations alleging this institution indulges in "torture" or "driving inmates mad" or creating "medieval" conditions that are "...*designed* [emphasis my own] to cause psychological damage..." to our population is so far beyond the truth as to be unworthy of mention except to deny the misguided analysis made by these yellow-journalists and to state unequivocally that such an accusation is bogus. Our inmates are fully aware of the current choreographed outcry against the "mentally ill" being incarcerated in a SuperMax. That these guys would do anything available to them to establish themselves individually as a member of the mentally-disturbed class in order to have a shot at an open-population prison {if that is their aim} or additional attention from the anti-prison buzzards flying overhead much of the time {if that is their medicine} and thereby thwarting their more egregious Tamms sentence is probably not out of the question. Time and again we have acceded to their histrionics and have sent them to an IDOC Special Needs facility for evaluation. As far as I know each of them has been returned to TCMSCC with a clean bill of psychological health.

24. The publicized assertion that at TCMSCC mentally-ill inmates have been allowed to remain "...covered in feces for days [while] others have had to drink toilet water during hot summer months because there is no other drinking water..." is, simply, a lie. Over these nearly fourteen years I have personally had to deal with many situations wherein the inmate may have, in an attempt to manipulate staff or other inmates, messed himself up to a deplorable extent mostly not mentionable in polite company. Never once did I notate any of us allowing any one of them to remain in the condition described above for any excessive length of time, even if we had to enforce their personal hygiene to some state-law mandatory extent. Additionally, whenever an inmate is on water-restriction for any one of many valid reasons his water supply is restored at least every two hours, around the clock, allowing hygiene and toilet facilities to be used almost normally while preventing the inmate's flooding his cell or adjoining areas. If any inmate has actually drunk "toilet water," a phenomenon that I have never observed, it was of his own volition and not because he had no alternative or was forced to do so.

25. Media and watch-dog allegations that TCMSCC employees have physically abused mentally-ill inmates are in the same spurious category as those incongruities listed above. In all these years at TCMSCC I have not witnessed an incident of any officer "beating up" an inmate. It would be physically

impossible to do so without being witnessed by other officers and many other inmates. To enter a cell the Control Officer must be notified by radio to operate the sliding door, each opening of which makes a permanent record in the Armory. To legally remove an inmate from a cell requires at least two TACT team members and often a supervising Lieutenant in addition to the Control Officer. The colossal uproar in the event of an attack against an inmate would be immediate from both officer and inmate sources. I have never known of any actual occurrence of this ruthless aberration. It would take an unattainable level of conspiracy to make it possible.

26. Other fecund propaganda claims being made by the same self-serving associations discussed above are just as disjointed and counterfeit. The one particularly offensive to me is their contention that the staff at Tamms "tortures" the inmates or alternatively that incarceration at Tamms as a matter of course constitutes "torture" of human beings. That is so far overboard from anything resembling the truth of the matter regarding conditions and situations at the Tamms SuperMax that it is not even worth anyone's time or effort to retort. The public and unrestricted expression of anything at all alluding to "torture" at this facility is a wanton ploy intended to sidetrack community awareness and opinion away from that which is essential and realistic to a very constricted and mistaken philosophy. In more simple words, it's a lie.

27. One hears and reads that the state relegates inmates to Tamms CMAX simply in order to rationalize the expense of an institution that isn't essential to the IDOC Mission Statement. In the ideology of these self-designated oversight individuals or committees, TCMSCC has no reason to exist. Again, I believe this disseminated philosophy to be purposely deceptive and a means designed by a liberal media and liberal attorneys and pro-prisoner organizations as well as members of prisoner's families to permanently close and secure the doors to TCMSCC.

28. One of the primary justifications for the continued existence of the Tamms Closed Maximum Security Correctional Center is the conviction that by identifying the most aggressive and vicious inmates and antagonistic STG leaders in the IDOC prison system and housing them at this restrictive and isolated facility, inmate violence perpetuated against both staff and the general prison population will diminish across the entire prison system. Various statistics have shown this principle to be true. Furthermore, the Supreme Court recently decided that the incompatibility of Security Threat Groups with any prison system that may be imperiled by the brutal reality of STG activity provides a reasonable rationale for the State's continued operation of facilities such as TCMSCC.

29. The State of California subsequently pointed out in an amicus brief {Wilkinson v. Austin (2005)} that "...clandestine, organized, fueled by race-based hostility, and committed to fear and violence as a means of disciplining their own and their rivals, gangs seek nothing less than to control prison life and to extend their power outside prison walls." Testifying against a member of the gang can bring swift, lethal retribution. The Court further noted that "...for prison gang members serving life sentences, some without the possibility of parole, the deterrent effects of ordinary criminal punishment may be substantially diminished." Segregation of STGs is a further justification for the existence of TCMSCC and an added reason it was designed and built: to provide a substantive *disincentive to commit violent criminal acts* by those with *no other effective restraint*. We do a pretty good job of that.

30. *The Colorado Department of Corrections {CDC} recently released the results of a year-long, federally funded study conducted at the Colorado State Penitentiary, a SuperMax prison in Cañon City where more than 700 men are held in isolated confinement in a manner very similar to that found at TCMSCC. The study established that long-term so-called "solitary confinement" exactly as is practiced at Tamms SuperMax had no detrimental effect on the mental health of inmates—including inmates with pre-*

*existing mental illness {emphasis my own}. In fact, some prisoners were found to actually **improve** in 23-hour-a-day lockdown under conditions of isolation exactly similar to the environment at Tamms.*

31. *Most of the responses in the expected rampant refutation relative to this qualified report directly contradict claims made within this specialized study because the CDC assertions loom in direct opposition to the outcry of many rabid opponents of an isolated prison environment. One of the above-referenced self-congratulated authorities on "solitary confinement" took huge exception to the ultimate findings of the Colorado study. Citing the CDC's direct opposition to his own theories he excerpted a portion of their novel claims that solitary confinement resulted in "...a slight improvement in psychological well-being across all study groups." He further noted that the study "...doesn't discount emotional distress, yet concludes that solitary confinement didn't cause it." From that point he launches into an obdurate and in my opinion slipshod verbal eruption declaring the entire outcome of a serious study compiled and fielded by some of his own substantive peer groups to be nothing but "garbage" as, he says, a consequence of the ubiquitous "garbage-in-garbage-out" syndrome employed by the originators of the study. This behavior seems to me to be in a manner not commensurate with the declarer's highly-self-touted position as an educated and erudite authority and expert on the subject of "solitary confinement."*

32. TCMSCC is the highest-security penal institution in Illinois. The IDOC designed the conditions here to be within the bounds of the US Constitution in order that the mere threat of being transferred to Tamms would dissuade convicts throughout the Illinois prison system from defying prison rules. The fact that this viewpoint works is substantiated by statistics and the experience of hundreds of staff at this and other facilities statewide. TCMSCC inmates are, for good reason, exposed to hardships not experienced in segregated confinement at any other maximum security facility in Illinois.

33. If by successfully containing these miscreants at this facility we save the life or limb of a single Correctional Officer, other staff member or even another inmate then we have done our job and have proved the institution's right to survive. Because there's not really any way to put a price on human life or life-changing injury, the "too expensive" argument is no more convincing than the "solitary confinement" nonsense. If TCMSCC did not exist the Illinois prison system would be a much more brutal and lethal war zone than is currently in evidence. All of our families just want us to come home at the end of each work day. I believe they have a right to expect that from the IDOC. I further believe that the continued function as currently configured of the Tamms Closed Maximum Security Correctional Center is instrumental in the safe and secure operation of the Illinois Department of Corrections statewide.

Sincerely,

C/O Jason A. Brooks
15 April 2012

Copy to:
Sen. David S. Luechtefeld
Sen. Gary Forby
Congressman Jerry Costello
Rep. Brandon Phelps
Rep. Mike Bost

Rep. John Bradley

I oppose the closure of Tamms Correctional Center. Tamms was constructed due to the fact the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) had and has individuals who don't comply to Departmental Rules. These individuals earn their way to Tamms. For a list on how they earn their way to Tamms just read the Administrative Code TITLE 20: CORRECTIONS, CRIMINAL JUSTICE, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT. Read: Placement at Tamms Correctional Center Section 505.40. A few examples are escaping, assaulting other prisoners or staff, in which causes DEATH or Great bodily harm, possessing weapons and engaging in non-consensual conduct (rape). I'm sorry, but I have no sympathy for individuals who engage in these types of activities. The judicial system separated these individuals from society for many reasons. Yet, these individuals still continue to have no respect for rules and regulations set forth by IDOC. The IDOC needs Tamms to maintain the safety and security of both staff and prisoners at all other facilities! The MAXIMUM SECURITY institutions couldn't handle these individuals when their was a DEATH PENALY in the State of Illinois! What makes Governor Quinn believe they can now?

K. Massey
concerned citizen

As a concerned citizen, employee, taxpayer and supporter of the local communities and local schools, I would like to go on record as an opponent to the closure of the Tamms Correctional Center. The Tamms Correctional Center was built and is operated for a specific purpose. A purpose that has proven to be effective. It is imperative that Tamms Correctional Center remain open to maintain safety and security within the Illinois Department of Corrections.

SAVE LIVES, save jobs . . . Keep Tamms Correctional Center open!

Deana Vaughn
Jonesboro, IL

I am writing in protest to the closing of the Tamms Correctional Center. I have worked at the facility since it opened in 1998. I was there before the first inmate arrived and I know how they are treated and what is being reported in the news and in the papers is not true. I firmly believe that everyone should be treated with dignity, fairness and respect and given the care that is expected and required. The inmates at Tamms are not just thrown into a cell and forgotten. They have access to medical, dental, optometry,

and mental health care if they need it. They have access to a law library, and also a regular library. Most of the inmates have their own televisions and radios. They go to yard daily, they have showers daily, they have religious services if requested. They have contact with people on a daily basis. The media makes it sound like they never speak or see anyone at all and that is just not true. I have been down on the wings where they are housed and if they are not talking to anyone it's by their own choice. They are locked up in their cell most of the time but lets remember why they are at Tamms. This is a prison and they are here because of something that THEY did, not because someone just grabbed them off the street and threw them in here. There is a reason, they were sent to Tamms. They made choices and with those choices come consequences and Tamms is one of those consequences. Tamms has made it safer for our security staff and non-security staff here and at other facilities and for the inmates. Closing Tamms will only make it worse for both. I don't think closing Tamms will balance the budget, it will only put people's lives in danger. Please look at other options because one life lost, is one too many.

Emilye Roach
Tamms Correctional Center

Good afternoon,

My name is Josh Jones and I am a proponent of closing the Tamms supermax prison permanently. I wish to submit my support for closing Tamms to the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability via this message. As an attorney barred in the great State of Illinois and a graduate of the University of Illinois College of Law, I am deeply considered with justice and ethics. I have examined the issue of Tamms supermax prison and I believe that the conditions imposed by that facility fall far short of our collective ethical duties. The U.N. Committee Against Torture considers prisons like Tamms to be cruel, inhuman and degrading, and a form of torture. I believe that Illinois prisons should not violate international human rights standards. Yes, closing Tamms would also save the State money and prevent wastefulness, but the ethical concerns are truly pressing. I hope you will do the right thing and close Tamms permanently.

Thanks for reading this comment and best wishes,

Josh Jones

I oppose the proposed closure of Tamms Correctional Center. Tamms was not designed to save money. It was designed to protect staff, to protect inmates, and to protect every living person who may come in contact with these inmates, whether it be intentional or by chance. It was designed to take away the gang control that was overrunning our prisons. It was designed to take the most dangerous and problematic inmates out of the regular prisons so other inmates would have a place they could do their time and be safe doing it. It was designed so that correctional staff could do their jobs without the threat of deadly assaults and intimidation. It was structurally designed for these "worst of the worst" inmates to alleviate threats of escape, riots, staff assaults, and hostage situations.

Numbers can be easily manipulated as they have been. The recent hiring of correctional staff and the intentional lowering of Tamms inmate numbers do not tell an accurate story. There are inmates who should be at Tamms and are not. One number that doesn't lie is this one... There have been "0" staff killed since Tamms opened. TAMMS WORKS!

Please keep Tamms Prison open.

S. Clark

Members of the Commission:

As a former official with the Illinois Department of Corrections I believe that my insights to the proposed closure of the Tamms Supermax facility would be helpful to the Commission. My career with the Department spanned 32 years concluding with service as Deputy Director. As Deputy Director the value of the Tamms facility was very evident to me. The security and safety made possible by the Supermax concept has improved the environment for inmates, working conditions for staff and supported the mission of the Illinois Department of Corrections.

Since Tamms opened significant inmate incidents including drug incidents, staff and inmate assaults, and deaths of inmates and staff due to violent assaults have dropped dramatically. These positive indicators

depict a safer environment for the entire population of the Department. The closed custody approach has worked at Tamms and throughout the Illinois Department of Corrections.

One of the indictments of the Tamms project is that an "inmate is assigned to Tamms for life." This is grossly inaccurate. Departmental procedures require a thorough and exhaustive review of an inmates history prior to Supermax assignment. Additionally it should be noted that each inmates continuing assignment to Tamms is reviewed annually. I am uniquely qualified to speak to this process. It was my job as Deputy Director to sign off on all inmate placements and continuing placements. With these focused evaluations there was turnover in the Tamms population.

Certainly these are difficult fiscal times for Illinois government. Making sure that tax dollars are spent in the most efficient manner is imperative. To this end it is clear that there is a cost benefit advantage to the closed custody system. Admittedly as a Southern Illinois resident I support keeping Tamms open. Maintaining a Supermax institution however at any locale within our state is paramount to sustaining the safety gains achieved with the Tamms institution. Continuing the operation of Tamms given it's construction and trained available staff is sound public policy.

Danny Hartline
Deputy Director (Retired)
Illinois Department of Corrections

Dear sir or madam,

I support the closure of Tamms prison.

Sincerely,

Tim Nafziger

6728 N Bosworth Ave, Apt 2N

Chicago, IL 60626

To Whom it May Concern:

I am against the closure of Tamms Correctional Center. It seems like there are two main topics that are in debate on here. Pat Quinn wants to close TCC as he thinks it will save money. The cost per inmate at Tamms Correctional Center, if broken down, would not be any greater than any other maximum security institution if Tamms was at full capacity. Tamms is operating as it should. It shows that prisoners are being placed there that should be and not just random prisoners drawn out of the pot to fill an institution. Tamms was built for a reason. We all know the reason it was built and Tamms does its job well. This is one of the reasons why Tamms should stay open. The other topic seems to be the people wanting Tamms to close down because of their view on how inmates are treated there. I work at Tamms, and have for about 10 1/2 years. Before that, I worked at Menard Correctional Center for 4 years. Tamms is not solitary confinement. If a person wanted to classify it as anything, it would be closer to a segregation unit, as that was what it was built for, to segregate the inmates from each other and the staff, so that they could do no harm to either. Inmates do talk to other inmates on their perspective wings, and do such things as play chess, checkers, or interact in other ways. There are a lot of inmates at Tamms that prefer to be there. They would rather have the single cell status, and prefer the climate controlled environment at Tamms versus other Maximum security institutions. They are allowed tv's, radios, religious services, religious meals and other amenities that if you asked the victims families, would prefer they not get. Yes, it is a prison, and yes, if you are incarcerated at Tamms you will be in your cell more than at an open population maximum prison, but thus, the reason why you were placed there. The staff, their families, and communities that they live in would all be affected by the closure of Tamms prison. Please consider this as you make your decision and thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion.

Sincerely,

Sgt. James Reynolds

To Whom it May Concern:

You have heard some of the testimonies about the inmate and staff murders prior to Tamms Supermax being built. Many of these deaths have appeared to fade over the years with the passing of time, which compels me to recount the death of Stateville Correctional Center Captain Harold Daniels. Captain Daniels was violently assaulted by an inmate on November 11, 1991 with a sock filled with bars of soap near the tunnel of Gate 8 as he was serving the State of Illinois. Captain Daniels was beaten and this senseless act by the inmate contributed to the death of Captain Harold Daniels on February 29, 1992. Captain Harold Daniels was considered to be an employee of high integrity, very professional, and well liked by his co-workers and subordinate staff. His supervisors reported that he maintained a good rapport with the inmate population. Captain Harold Daniels has been sadly missed by his family.

There are many "young" staff working for Governor Quinn that have voiced their 'professional opinions' in favor of moving the Tamms Supermax Offenders to the 140 year old Pontiac Correctional Center and have indicated that the violent offenders could "easily be housed at Pontiac without any problems." Please keep in mind that when Captain Daniels and I were walking the galleries at Stateville and Pontiac in 1991 and were witnessing offenders and staff being violently murdered, those same staff working for Governor Quinn were wearing diapers and watching Barney on mom and dad's television.

Captain Harold Daniels needs to be honored by remembering his service to this great state and his sacrifice. Please remember the end of his watch by keeping Tamms Supermax Open!

Randall Clark

Advocate of Captain Daniels

Let me start by saying I was at the hearing at Shawnee College on April 2nd, and yes I stayed for the entire meeting. I am STRONGLY AGAINST Quinn's proposal to close Tamms Correctional Center. I'm proud to say I have worked at Tamms since before the first inmate came to Tamms. I am also a resident of Tamms Illinois in Alexander County.

Back in the 1990's when inmates were out of control in the State of Illinois; somebody came up with the idea of a Super-Max Prison. Great minds went to work, Tamms was chosen as the site for the only Super-Max Prison in Illinois. Research was done, Legal Issues were addressed, Policies and Procedures were written, Buildings were constructed, Money was spent... 1995 the Minumin Security Unit opened, 1998 the Super-Max facility opened. During the planning and building stage, word got out to the inmates at all the other Illinois prisons "Better be good, you don't want to go to Tamms". Inmates don't get sent to Tamms for being good, they earned their way to Tamms for being bad. If they assault staff, if they assault other inmates, if they play in the gangs, if they can't follow the rules, they will and SHOULD go to Tamms. Before Tamms Super-Max even opened, Tamms was Working!

I hear all the lies about how "in-human" the inmates are treated at Tamms, and that's what they are "LIES". These inmates do have contact everyday; they talk and play games with each other on the housing

units. They have TV's and Radios. They get meals, mail service, showers, and haircuts. Security staff does wing checks every 30 minutes. Nursing staff do rounds every 8 hours. Mental Health Staff do rounds every week. The inmates get very good Medical, Dental, Optometry, Mental Health and Counseling services. These inmates receive better services than a lot of our children and elderly get in this fine State of Illinois, and that's the truth.

I hear the "budget woes", well I'm sure there are a lot of people that have finance problems, but they don't do away with part of the family to save money. The jobs that will be lost if Tamms is closed, will be devastating, not only to Southern Illinois, but the whole state. Taking away jobs by closing Tamms is NOT the way to balance the budget.

There is a lot of waste in this state, but Tamms is not a waste, Tamms saves lives. There is no way to count how many lives Tamms C-Max has saved, if Tamms is closed you can start counting how many lives are lost.

The proposed closure of Tamms needs to be stopped now, "TAMMS CORRECTIONAL CENTER IS PRICELESS"!!!!

Connie Ashworth

Tamms, Illinois

Correctional Officer Prayer

The Correctional Officer stood and faced his God, which must always come to pass. He hoped his shoes were shining, just as brightly as his brass.

"Step forward now, Correctional Officer. How shall I deal with you?"

Have you always turned the other cheek? To my church have you been true?"

The Correctional Officer squared his shoulders and said, "No, Lord I guess I ain't, because those of us who carry badges can't always be a Saint.

I've had to work most Sundays, and at times my work was rough, and sometimes I've been in the midst of violence. Inside the fences are awful tough.

But I never took a penny, that wasn't mine to keep,

I worked a lot of overtime, when the bills just got too steep.

And I never passed a cry for help, though at times I shook with fear, and sometimes, God forgive me, I wept unmanly tears.

I know I don't deserve a place among the people here. They never wanted me around except to calm their fears.

If you've a place for me here, Lord, it needn't be so grand. I never expected or had too much, but if you don't I'll understand."

There was silence all around the Throne, where the Saints often trod. As the Correctional Officer waited quietly for the judgment of his God.

"Step forward now, Correctional Officer, you've borne your burdens well.

Come walk a beat on Heaven's streets, you've done your time in Hell."

Lieutenant Peter Burd found himself standing in the "hell" of Stateville Correctional Center on January 10, 1977 supervising 125 inmates in the Dining Hall. Any of you that can remember working in the maximum security prison Dining Halls prior to Tamms Supermax being built can relate to Lt. Burd. As Lieutenant Burd was supervising his 125 inmates he was stabbed in the neck, severing the carotid artery by a passing inmate. An 8" shank was found near the site of the attack which occurred on January 10, 1977, which was also the day Governor James Thompson was inaugurated. Lt. Burd was only 33 years old and was the father of three children. Lt. Burd was also an eight-year veteran who deserved better. The attack on Burd was one of three incidents in two days. Another Lieutenant was severely beaten the day prior to Burd's death. The third Lieutenant was violently stabbed several times the same day of Burd's death. The series of attacks were attributed to inmate gangs trying to exert control and were timed to coincide with the gubernatorial inauguration.

One Will County State's Attorney, Edward Petka quoted, "the stabbing demonstrated the need of the death penalty in Illinois. I certainly would testify for it. Especially for killing prison guards. I believe it would have a very definite impact. Inmates would have to consider it before making the decision to kill guards." Legislation was passed in the Spring and Governor Thompson signed the death penalty statute into law June 21, 1977. According to reports Lieutenant Burd had the feeling all summer that something was going to happen...it was his gut feeling. He had a chance to take his vacation and he cancelled it, because he was committed to seeing the problem through with his co-workers. That was the last decision he made.

We no longer have Will County State's Attorney Ed. Petka's and Lt. Burd's death penalty. Tamms Supermax is now the only deterrent. One I.D.O.C. Offender recently and violently assaulted a staff person at a correctional center in our state. Once the administrative review was conducted and the offender was advised he was being transferred to Tamms Supermax he replied, "**I thought it closed.**"

Let's not forget our fallen staff, let's not re-invent the wheel, let's not overlook the gut feeling from our seasoned staff, and let's not allow our offender population to forget that, "**Tamms is open**".

Lt. R.K. Clark
Advocate of Fallen Staff

Imagine your loved one whom you most cherish and not being able to touch him for seven years.

That is my life...

I beg you to have mercy and do the right thing by closing TAMMS. Not only will it save the State money, but it will also save the lives of our loved ones.

Rose Sifuentes

Dear Committee Representatives,

I am writing to inform you of my concern for the men at Tamms and of my support for closing this facility.

I strongly believe that IL does not need this facility designed for sensory deprivation. Such long-term and often indefinite solitary confinement is unjust and inhumane. What we do to these men is torture. No one deserves this isolation.

For human rights reasons and for fiscal reasons, please do the right thing and close the Tamms Supermax facility. IL can save \$27 million and allocate it elsewhere and these men can start to heal their minds.

Sincerely,
Laura Hsieh

Tamms is nothing but, another concentration camp with a new name. Inmates are locked down 23hrs out of 24 everyday, that's pure torture, they receive insufficient amount of food, no sunlight, no physical contact, and no movement. It's heart breaking to visit your love one and see how they are deteriorating. When they do get a visit you sit there and watch them shackled in chains to the steel stump they must sit on for 4hrs. I get that they have committed a crime but, they are still human beings and should be treated as such, not as wild animals. The name it self is inappropriate TAMMS Correctional Center, what are they correcting?

There's no rehabilitation programs, no educational resources, and they don't even had adequate medical treatment for the ones with mental issues. Please close Tamms and allocate that money to something positive.

Grace Warren

I am very much in favor of closing Tamms Supermax. My son has been at Tamms two and one half years. He was given a ticket for punching someone and told that he needed to be in segregation for one year. After the year was complete, with no more tickets at all, he was told he had not been at Tamms long enough and needed to be put in "Administration Detention". There was no other reason given as to why he could not leave Tamms. He had been a "model" prisoner and completed all the certificate programs he had been asked to complete. He was told this during his hearing which by law was supposed to be recorded but was not. He was also told that the average length of stay at Tamms is five years. Five years of total isolation, surrounded by concrete walls, fed through a slit in the door. His son has not hugged him since he was sent there and he was six years old. His son is now nine years old and asks constantly when he can hug his dad. I work in the mental health field as a therapist. I am very, very worried about my son's depression. He has lost over 30 pounds and tells me all the time he does not know how much longer he can endure this torture. He did not stab, rape or kidnap anyone. He did not try to escape. The stories that are being told about the type of prisoner that is at Tamms are very much exaggerated. Pontiac is not full at all. They have over 400 beds still available in segregation where these inmates from Tamms could be moved. The guards at Tamms can be transferred to other prisons and the majority will not lose their jobs. Tamms costs over 64,000 per inmate per year and that is a horrible waste of money. They do not transfer inmates because they want to keep it as full as they can to keep it open. So many studies have been done that show how much damage is done to a person's psychological state being in solitary confinement for long periods of time. It is a crime in itself.

Katie Jones.

I Am A Mom I have a son that has been incarcerated in Tamms for twelve years. I am crying out for mercy. The psychological effect of torture, locking up a human being for twenty four hours a day in a gray box is horrendous. I am begging, please close Tamms. The Worst of the Worst, my son owes the state thousands of dollars for filing grievances. He is considered indigent, due to the enormous legal fees owed, he cannot receive commissary. Any money sent to him goes toward his legal bill. I have spoken to several mothers who informed me that their son was sent to Tamms after filing numerous grievances. Tamms is based on lies and deceit, it is not based on rehabilitating but driving human beings into insanity

Brenda Smith

To whom it may concern:

Tamms is expensive and inefficient. There are only one hundred and eighty prisoners there, and if they were all to be transferred to Pontiac, that would amount to 27 million dollars which the state of Illinois could then put to profitable use. God knows, we need the money.

That's the important financial side of the issue. But what must also be taken into consideration is the irreparable psychological damage done to people who are kept in solitary confinement over time. This refers to all the prisoners, but I make particular mention of those who are already mentally ill. It appears that Tamms has been a dumping ground for people who suffer from mental illness; the original prisons to which they were sent, sent them on to Tamms in order to get rid of them. Hardly a solution. These are people who are in desperate need of help, and instead of that, they have been victims of torture - this is what it has been called by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch amongst others, and Juan E. Mendez of the U.S. Commission on Torture has called for a global ban on solitary confinement in excess of 15 days. FIFTEEN DAYS! And a significant number of these men have been at Tamms for ten years.

There is no conceivable good reason for keeping this hell hole open. It is an appalling place, of which all of us Americans should be ashamed - and would be, if people knew what was really going on here.

I pray that your committee will consult the terrible financial waste of keeping the prison open, and also the plight of people driven to suicide and madness by their situation here; and that you will listen to those who have posed public statements condemning Tamms because the conditions are cruel, inhuman, and degrading, and a form of torture. Surely you cannot in good conscience permit this situation to continue.

Sincerely yours,

Anne Schultz, Chicago

To Whom It May Concern:

Although there is never a good time to be wasteful with tax dollars, officials are realizing now, more than ever, the explicit inefficiency and expendability of TAMMS Correctional Facility. Not only does this facility serve no useful purpose within IDOC, it further diminishes the safety of the general public as well as the officers that serve the public.

This facility must be closed, not only to address the ethical morale of the Illinois Department of Corrections, but to ensure the public that IDOC is capable of finding smart, efficient and progressive solutions to crime.

--

Ibi Cole

I strongly support the closure of TAMMS, its operation contradicts the mission statement of IDOC "...assures offenders of their constitutional rights and maintains programs to enhance the success of offenders' reentry into society." (-- http://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/reportsandstatistics/Documents/FY10_DOC_Annual_Rpt.pdf) and does not foster "...With successful reentry being a major focus." the main focus of IDOC.

Please allow TAMMS to close.
Madeleine Ward
CURE IL

To whom it may concern. My child's father Roy Maldonado has been in tamms for more than five years. He has been ill with ear infections more than 20 times and medical attention has not been well it is so sad to visit him shackled feet and hands. Please give him his dignity back. Closing of tamms will help his mental state and many more.
thank you

Rosa Maria Lopez

I am writing to urge you to close Tamms. It is an inhuman, counter-productive method of social control. We can do better. You can do better.

Thank you,
Salome Chasnoff

Please close Tamms Prison.

It's simple: As a resident of Illinois, I know that the people of Illinois do not support cruelty. Tamms Prison is just that. It's hurtful, damaging to residents, families, our communities, our state as a whole.

I have corresponded with a resident of Tamms, and while he spoke only of his own spiritual growth and those that have supported him throughout his time there, my heart breaks that it is my state, my government, my tax dollars, my representatives that subject him to such cruelty. Solitary confinement is psychologically damaging. It is torture. This devalues us, it soils our collective soul. This is not who we are. This is not what we stand for.

Close Tamms now.

Thank you,
Tricia Partlow
60618

Dear Sir or Madam,

I write in strong support of the Governor's plan to close Tamms Supermax. As an Illinois citizen, I am deeply saddened and upset that we have such a facility in our state, at which prisoners are subjected to the inhuman punishment of solitary confinement. I believe prisons are necessary, but the conditions at Tamms are unnecessarily cruel.

Sincerely,

Lisa Ruddick

CLOSE TAMMS. Our State is Bankrupt...bottom line...save \$27 million and **End Torture!** IDOC Director answered the Appropriations Committee's questions for hours on Tuesday and Wednesday. He did a wonderful job explaining it all. It is a very simple decision! **CLOSE TAMMS! BULLDOZE IT! END TORTURE!**

Janice E. Pohlman
Quincy, IL 62305

Dear Members of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability:

I urge you to support the governor's plan to close Tamms supermax.

- Tamms has caused suffering to me, my family member or my friends [and say why.]
- Prolonged isolation leads to suicide attempts, self-mutilation, hallucinations, smearing of feces, other mental breakdowns and extreme suffering. This offends basic decency, and it is bad policy.
- Tamms has become a dumping ground for people with mental illnesses. It is a vicious cycle. The longer a man is held in solitary, the more abnormal his behavior becomes, and he is punished with more time in solitary. Break the cycle and spend the money on treatment.
- The supermax causes lasting physiological and psychological damage and impedes reentry to society or to other prisons. These men are returning to our neighborhoods and communities--40% will do so within the next 20 years. We want them to come back intact--not mentally impaired.

- The majority of the men at Tamms are just like those in regular Illinois prisons. Many men have been transferred from Tamms in the past 4 years, and some of them end up at medium security prisons.
- Tamms is the obvious prison to close. It is expensive, inefficient and harmful. Closing it will not affect overcrowding or cut essential social services. We already have an all-segregation prison--Pontiac.
- There are only 180 prisoners in the supermax. If they are transferred to Pontiac, we can redirect 27 million dollars.
- Alternatives are cheaper and safer. There is a trend to shut down supermax prisons. Mississippi, Maine and Virginia have closed or greatly reduced their supermax prisons and not only saved money but reduced violence. Colorado opened a supermax 18 months ago and has just decided to close it!
- International human rights monitors, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have condemned Tamms because they consider the conditions to be cruel, inhuman and degrading, and a form of torture.
- Last year, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on torture Juan E. Méndez specifically highlighted the harm of supermax prisons and called for a global ban on solitary confinement in excess of 15 days.

I urge you to vote for closure. Thank you so much for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Mike Elliott
Park Forest, IL

To Whom It May Concern:

Ever since I learned about Tamms about three or four years ago, I have prayed it would be closed. It is torture as defined by the U.N. convention on torture of which the U.S. is a part. No matter what crime someone commits, we should not, as a society, torture him. To me, it is that simple.

And the fact that mental health is such an issue in the prison, combined with the problems of transparency about why people are sent there and how they can earn their way out, just augments the problems inherent in the institution.

I know jobs will be lost, but I do not believe it is good for men to earn their living by torturing other men. We must find other jobs for Illinois.

Thank you.

Jacob Juntunen
5808 N Kenmore Ave #1
Chicago IL 60660

Dear Members of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability:

I urge you to support the governor's plan to close Tamms supermax because I have several friends who loved ones are housed in this inhumane facility. Tamms has caused suffering to my friends and their family members. Mothers, wives and children have not been able to touch their family member. They have seen inmates lose extreme amount of weight because of the lack of food served to them. Emotional and spiritual depreciation has affected many of the inmates' children and loved ones because of no physical relationship with those they love. Some have seen a decline in the mental and physical ability of their family member housed at Tamms Supermax. No human being or animal should be treated like that. Even a dog needs its head rubbed every now and then.

- Prolonged isolation leads to suicide attempts, self-mutilation, and hallucinations, smearing of feces, other mental breakdowns and extreme suffering. This offends basic decency, and it is bad policy.
- Tamms has become a dumping ground for people with mental illnesses. It is a vicious cycle. The longer a man is held in solitary, the more abnormal his behavior becomes, and he is punished with more time in solitary. Break the cycle and spend the money on treatment.
- The supermax causes lasting physiological and psychological damage and impedes reentry to society or to other prisons. These men are returning to our neighborhoods and communities--40% will do so within the next 20 years. We want them to come back intact--not mentally impaired.
- The majority of the men at Tamms are just like those in regular Illinois prisons. Many men have been transferred from Tamms in the past 4 years, and some of them end up at medium security prisons.
- Tamms is the obvious prison to close. It is expensive, inefficient and harmful. Closing it will not affect overcrowding or cut essential social services. We already have an all-segregation prison--Pontiac.
- There are only 180 prisoners in the supermax. If they are transferred to Pontiac, we can redirect 27 million dollars.
- Alternatives are cheaper and safer. There is a trend to shut down supermax prisons. Mississippi, Maine and Virginia have closed or greatly reduced their supermax prisons and not only saved money but reduced violence. Colorado opened a supermax 18 months ago and has just decided to close it!

- International human rights monitors, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have condemned Tamms because they consider the conditions to be cruel, inhuman and degrading, and a form of torture.
- Last year, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on torture Juan E. Méndez specifically highlighted the harm of supermax prisons and called for a global ban on solitary confinement in excess of 15 days.

I urge you to vote for closure of Tamms Supermax, and consider keeping Dwight Correctional Center open. There are more than 1000 women in Dwight some that have been there for years. Moving them could cause a permanent affect ripping their environment apart. I'm praying that God guide you in your decision, may you exemplify integrity of a country that's built on Christianity. Thank you so much for your time and consideration. God blessed you.

Sincerely

Paula V. Daniels

Dear Members of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability:

I urge you to support the governor's plan to close Tamms supermax! Solitary confinement does not help inmates to become healthier and more sane members of society-- it in fact greatly decreases their ability to interact with humans and return to our communities.

Beyond social reasons, Tamms is a very expensive prison and transferring the small number of prisoners from Tamms to Pontiac would save the state 27 million dollars. Many other states (Mississippi, Virginia, and more) have recently closed their supermax prisons and are saving money for it. Not to mention the huge impact it makes on the lives of the men who live in solitary confinement and their families who would finally be able to touch their loved ones again.

Please please vote for closure. It would make me and thousands of other Illinois residents so happy and thankful. There are just so many alternatives to Tamms that aren't as awful and as expensive. We can be smarter about this. Thank you for making it happen.

Sincerely,
eliza s. behlen

Dear Sir or Madame --

I'm writing to implore you to follow the governor's plan to close the Tamms super-max prison. I grew up in the suburbs of Chicago, and hate that one of the things my wonderful home state is known for is the most barbaric solitary confinement in the country.

You can save money, you can save face, and you can save your own spirits by taking this opportunity to close the prison. I don't blame you for not doing it before, the political moment hadn't presented itself. But now the moment is here, making it possible for you to do the right thing. Please don't turn away.

These men are criminals, yes, some of them beasts I am sure. But they are still men. They still deserve to be treated as human beings. If they deserve death, then give them death. But don't prolong their lives in a cruel and unusual condition.

Blessings to you all --
David Bolger

Dear Members of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability:

I urge you to support the governor's plan to close Tamms supermax.

Among the many reasons are the following:

> Tamms is the obvious prison to close. It is expensive, inefficient
>and harmful. Closing it will not affect overcrowding or cut essential
>social services. We already have an all-segregation prison--Pontiac.

>

> There are only 180 prisoners in the supermax. If they are transferred
>to Pontiac, we can redirect 27 million dollars.

>

* Alternatives are cheaper and safer. There is a trend to shut down supermax prisons. Mississippi, Maine and Virginia have closed or greatly reduced their supermax prisons and not only saved money but reduced violence. Colorado opened a supermax 18 months ago and has just decided to close it!

Since Colorado has known about supermax prisons for years because the FEderal supermax prison is in Florence, Colorado their decision that their state supermax prison is unsuccessful is very important to take into consideration.

While I must state a concern for the loss of jobs by the closing of Tamms, the saving of \$27 million for the State of Illinois by transferring the 180 Tamms prisoners to Pontiac is a very strong argument for closing Tamms at this particular time in Illinois financial situation.

I could go on with many more reasons, but I have made my point.

I write as the former Chairperson of the Illinois Prisons and Jails Project which had the privilege of monitoring all state correctional facilities. Tamms was built after my chairmanship ended but I have been in every maximum security prison in the state to observe and report on conditions.

My 15 years as Chairperson of IPJP (at the time a project of the John Howard Association) taught me that prisoners are people and that their physical surroundings makes a huge difference in their behavior.

Sincerely yours,

Nancy B. Mikelsons
formerly
Chairperson
Illinois Prisons and Jails Project
1978 - 1994

To the Esteemed Committee,

I worked for twelve years in the field of violence prevention. Some of the most ardent workers were former Tamms inmates. These were individuals who had lived in the streets for their childhoods, and had no path to live a mainstream life. Because of either their leadership in other prisons, or their discord with prison leadership elsewhere they were sent to Tamms.

These men told the saddest stories of endless, mind numbing solitude, sensory deprivation, and acquiring peculiar rituals of systematically scratching or cutting themselves as a way to cope or counterbalance the lack of touch. One told of feeling his sanity was slipping away day by day. He kept having to dig deeper to attempt to hold himself together.

As a clinical psychologist the fact that state sponsored torture exists and is financed to the tune of over \$16,000,000 annually is morally incomprehensible. When 95% of those who go into prison come out at some point, it is incumbent upon a righteous society to do all within our power to rehabilitate these citizens, rather than to torture and dehumanize them. In allowing or attempting to justify such torture of our fellow human beings, we dehumanize ourselves.

It is time to do right. It is time to close Tamms.

Sincerely,

Elena Quintana, Ph.D.

As a citizen, a taxpayer and a human being I urge you to close Tamms. At Tamms, IDOC is destroying human beings, creating horrific problems for the communities they come from, and wasting vast sums of money. The real cost of solitary confinement at Tamms is estimated at \$90,000 per man. What could we do with that money? We could send five kids to college. We could send twenty kids to daycare. We could build our communities instead of tearing them down. And yes, we could create jobs.

Do the right thing. Close Tamms now!

Sincerely,

Johanna Ryan
6705 21st Street
Berwyn IL 60402

Dear State Committee Members,

Mike Frierichs is my own senator and I understand he is on this committee. Many of my Quaker and Mennonite friends have been trying to reach him to say we support the closing of Tamms because it is horribly inhumane, but we are not getting any responses that would indicate he is listening. I hope that this is because he is busy.

We in the Interfaith community, including McKinley Foundation have been working for years to bring awareness to this place of solitary confinement torture and now that the Governor has nominated it for closing, we hope that you all will take the next step.

I am a lifelong supportive member of the AFT union and I do not condone the efforts of AFSCME to keep Tamms open, There are plenty of jobs for them in nearby prisons to Tamms, and even if there were not, professionals are not entitled to their jobs at the expense of the well being of those they serve.

PLEASE CLOSE TAMMS!

Barbara Kessel of Urbana, IL.

TAMMS is too expensive, and it is cruel and unusual punishment.

Prolonged isolation leads to suicide attempts, self-mutilation, hallucinations, mental breakdowns and extreme suffering. It is inhumane and it is bad policy.

The longer a man is held in solitary, the more abnormal his behavior becomes. Break the cycle and spend the money on treatment.

Supermax causes lasting physiological and psychological damage and impedes reentry to society or to other prisons. These men are returning to our neighborhoods and communities--40% will do so within the next 20 years. We want them to come back intact--not mentally impaired.

The men at Tamms are not animals -- they are just like other men in regular Illinois prisons. Many have been transferred from Tamms in the past 4 years, and some of them end up at medium security prisons.

Tamms is expensive, inefficient and harmful. Closing it will not affect overcrowding. There are only 180 prisoners in the supermax. If they are transferred to Pontiac, we can redirect 27 million dollars.

Alternatives are cheaper and safer. There is a trend to shut down supermax prisons. Mississippi, Maine and Virginia have closed or greatly reduced their supermax prisons and not only saved money but reduced violence. Colorado opened a supermax 18 months ago and has just decided to close it!

International human rights monitors, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have condemned Tamms because they consider the conditions to be cruel, inhuman and degrading, and a form of torture. Last year, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on torture Juan E. Méndez specifically highlighted the harm of supermax prisons and called for a global ban on solitary confinement in excess of 15 days.

Please be wise and courageous, make the responsible decision and close TAMMS.

Thank you,

Barbara Koenen
5530 S. Shore Drive 15B
Chicago IL 60637

To the committee:

I write to urge you to continue with the plan to close Tamms. It is so inhumane to treat people in such isolation as is imposed there. That isolation includes not only the 23-hour lockdown. It also includes the isolation from being far away from where people live, where family members of those incarcerated live. The public is unable to understand what goes on down there. Those who work there know that they experience a relative lack of scrutiny, and that people don't care about "criminals". But you should. You should know by now what the long term impact of that isolation is. You are responsible for the safety of all of us. Please take that seriously and keep Tamms closed.

Nancy Bothne

1117 W Lunt Avenue
Chicago IL 60626

Dear Members of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability:

I live in Evanston, IL and as an Illinois resident, I wanted to use my voice to request that you close Tamms.

I believe closing Tamms would set a wonderful example to young people of Illinois. Let's stand up to say: "if people do things you don't like, it's still not ok to violate their human rights." I don't want to raise a generation of young people who believe human dignity isn't that important, particularly if people made mistakes.

I believe Tamms hurts the prisoners, hurts our society now and when they're released. It is cruel, it is expensive, and it violates several treaties on human rights.

Dave Sum

Tamms is a fiscal nightmare and there is no real reason for the increased costs. The majority of the men in Tamms are no more dangerous than others. When many transfers take place, they are sent to medium security facilities.

Aside from fiscal concerns, there are also human rights concerns. Human rights groups have condemned Tamms specifically because they consider the conditions to be a form of torture. The UN Special Rapporteur on torture even highlighted supermax prisons in his report for these dangerous impacts and effects.

Do the right thing. Close Tamms.

Solidarity,
-Neil Parthun

Hello,

I am writing to participate in the public comment on proposed closing of Tamms Supermax. I strongly support this closure, for both humanitarian and fiscal reasons. First, the overwhelming evidence indicates that the conditions at Tamms, in particular the extreme isolation, are cruel on their face, and they increase mental health problems for a great number of prisoners. For moral reasons alone, this prison should never have been opened, and it should be closed immediately.

Second, Tamms is undeniably a waste of money for a state that has been financially strapped for almost a decade. As a Certified Public Accountant specializing in non-profit organizations, I assure you that no non-profit project with the ratio of dollars spent for "outcomes" produced would ever be funded in Illinois if it were run by anyone other than the Department of Corrections. Don't let fear-mongering on "safety" or "jobs" distract from the obvious fact that the State of Illinois can no longer afford to run a prison this expensive.

Thank you for your time and attention. I sincerely hope that Tamms is closed as soon as possible.

Sincerely,
Michael Staudenmaier, CPA
2449 N. Monticello, #1
Chicago, IL 60647

Dear Members of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability:

I urge you to support the governor's plan to close Tamms supermax prison.

Tamms is not only expensive and inefficient, it also contributes to the mental degradation of prisoners, many of whom will someday return to their communities mentally impaired.

Please follow the trend of other states like Mississippi, Maine and Virginia by closing Tamms. Closing Tamms is fiscally and socially responsible.

Thank you for your time.

Best,

Hilary K. Marshall
Chicago, IL

Dear Members of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability:

I urge you to support the governor's plan to close Tamms supermax.

Tamms' practices are inhuman and physically and mentally damaging. Ten years is too long. Please do the right thing. There is no better budget cut out there!

I urge you to vote for closure. Thank you so much for your time and attention.

Sincerely,
Terri Kapsalis, PhD
1901 W. Chase Ave.
Chicago, IL 60626

Dear CGFA Commissioners:

Please consider the human rights violations issues and intrinsic uncorrectable flaws in the Tamms Supermax operation as well as the prudential cost-effectiveness and budget reasons for closing Tamms, as desired by the IDOC itself and affirmed by Governor Quinn. As a writer on medical and health care ethics and research, and as a volunteer supporter of coalitions and specific groups working to reform Tamms operation and develop standards--dating back to 2009--I could cite many specifics and first-hand testimonies of ex-Tamms residents and their families. Here's just one category--violation of fundamental human rights, dignity, and basic human flourishing. This comes from my role as Catholic parish Respect Life/Consistent Life Coordinator (St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church, Chicago (in Hyde Park). Torture appears on our American Catholic Bishops (U..S. Conference of Catholic Bishops) very short list of "intrinsic evils"--always wrong, never justified no matter what ends are intended. Solitary confinement over an extended period (more than one year, now proposed as more than 15 days) constitutes torture, according to the U.N. Commission on Torture. (Last year, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on torture Juan E. Méndez specifically highlighted the harm of supermax prisons and called for a global ban on solitary confinement in excess of 15 days).

According to my Catholic classic, social, and medical ethics, social interaction is absolutely an essential precondition for all human flourishing (e.g., Edmund Pellegrino,MD, dir. clinical ethics at Georgetown University, formerly dir. of President's Council on Biomedical Ethics).

Please keep these fundamental human life and dignity issues foremost. Look at the mental illness, suicides, self-mutilation, and other pathologies generated by Tamms. Be assured that Pontiac (has a mx security component) can take in the Tamms prisoners. There is no prison crowding issue here, and safety and security will not be compromised. Most dangerous would be to keep Tamms and release mentally damaged inmates, untreated and unprepared to survive in society, when their time is up.

Thank you. Could one of you respond to me and my co-volunteers on these concerns?

Sincerely, Louise Kaegi 5305 S. Greenwood Ave., Chicago IL 60615

Dear Members of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability:

Please support the governor's plan to close Tamms supermax.

Supermax prisons are cruel and vastly unusual punishment. Where else on earth are human beings involuntarily isolated from one another for years at a time except torture chambers?

There is no place for these kind of facilities in the land of the free. They only cause us more problems, like inflicting mental disease on their inhabitants and wasting millions of dollars a year (if those held in Tamms are transferred to Pontiac, we can redirect 27 million dollars).

Please vote to close Tamms.

Thank you for your time.

Ame Wiltzius
Champaign, IL 61822

Dear Members of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability;

I urge you to support the governor's plan to close Tamms supermax.

The supermax causes lasting physiological and psychological damage and impedes reentry to society or to other prisons. These men are returning to our neighborhoods and communities--40% will do so within the next 20 years. We want them to come back intact--not mentally impaired.

Prolonged isolation leads to suicide attempts, self-mutilation, hallucinations, other mental breakdowns and extreme suffering. This offends basic decency, and it is bad policy.

I urge you to vote for closure. Thank you so much for your time and attention.

Debra McMutuary

Campaign In Support of C Number Prisoners

Dear Friends,

I suggest two things: 1) Close Tamms as a supermax prison. 2) Keep current Tamms prison staff working -- by employing them to run Tamms as a less locked-down facility, as Mississippi, Maine and Virginia are currently either doing or moving toward doing; Colorado has also just decided to close their supermax.

My point here is that a supermax prison makes people less rather than more socially competent; it is also a form of torture. It is also the case that Anna, Illinois and surrounding southern Illinois towns will be decimated as a source of employment if Tamms is simply closed down.

It is important on many counts that we find a Third Way, a way that both restores rehabilitation as a role for a prison (through education and building socialization skills for inmates) and at the same time keeps a whole area of our state economically more viable. Consider, for instance, the effect on tax revenues if southern Illinois drops off the economic map. This is not a time for either-or thinking; please consider finding a Third Way.

Blessings,
Mariellen Gilpin

To the Office of the Governor of Illinois:

I am writing, as a resident and taxpayer in the State of Illinois, to urge Governor Pat Quinn to follow through on his public commitment to close the Tamms Supermax Prison. Facilities like these are unsustainable diversions of needed public funding in a time of austerity. But more importantly, they are inhumane institutions that have no place in our community, or any other that presumes to call itself civilized. I urge you to do the right thing and close this shameful facility down, allowing Illinois to divert its funding to building communities in order to truly reduce the causes of crime.

Sincerely,

Adam Green

Dear Sir/Madam:

I learned about Tamm's many years ago when I was 21, and am now 26. I do not live in Illinois, but have been following the issues surrounding Tamm's and I find closing the prison to be good news. It seems that it will save the state money, and could potentially help a good number of people by either returning their friends or family to healthier facilities. No man or woman is meant to spend a long period of time alone as it can only exacerbate their issues. Please see the two points below for further reason to close Tamm's.

- Tamms is the obvious prison to close. It is expensive, inefficient and harmful. Closing it will not affect overcrowding or cut essential social services. We already have an all-segregation prison--Pontiac.
- There are only 180 prisoners in the supermax. If they are transferred to Pontiac, we can redirect 27 million dollars.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this issue.

Margo Hanson
Minneapolis,MN

After reading the opinion of the **State Journal Register (SJR)** regarding the proposed closure of the Tamms Correctional Center (Tamms CC), I was shocked to say the least. As an employee with the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) for over 17 years and a current employee at the Tamms CC, I certainly take a personal interest in this prison's continued operation. I was amazed that this paper concluded that the Tamms CC needed to be closed because "It simply costs too much." Obviously, there is no one at the **SJR** who can recall the mess that the Illinois Department of Corrections was in during the 1980's and 1990's with gang violence and the resultant staggering number of staff and inmate assaults. Furthermore, it is apparent that there is little regard for the frontline staff who will most certainly pay, possibly with their own lives, for the ill-conceived proposal to close this needed facility!

Let me make this clear. The proposed closure of the Tamms CC has little, if anything, to do with money and everything to do with political policy. For the \$23 million in estimated savings actually to be realized, all inmates would have to be released and all employees would have to be laid off. Considering the cost of transferring these inmates to other facilities and the salaries of 118 employees who will remain on the IDOC payroll, the savings is closer to \$10 million. This figure does not reflect the fact that there are many inmates at the Tamms CC who cannot be housed at any other facility in the State of Illinois. Factoring in the cost of transferring approximately 50 inmates out of state, the figure is closer to \$8 million. Yes, taxpayers will be paying another state to house our inmates! Find, if you can, another facility that can operate at this cost and keep the rest of Illinois Department of Corrections safe and secure!

The proposed closure of the Tamms CC is nothing more than Governor Quinn's catering to the activist groups who have been trying to shutter this facility since the first brick was set. Their attempts in court, over the past 13 years, have been unsuccessful, and their only recourse was to bend the ear of the Governor. It is obvious that this is what has happened. It's also obvious the **SJR** has sided with Governor Quinn on this matter. They both must think that the lives of IDOC staff come second to common sense.

Patrick Trokey

Anna, IL

We need to close Tamms. Not only is the financial cost per prisoner compared to that of other facilities incredibly expensive which is why the governor wishes to close it but it is also incredibly inhumane with its long term solitary confinement. Even criminals deserve humane treatment.

Eldon Grossman

TAMMS SUPERMAX PRISON, AND OTHERS LIKE IT, MUST BE CLOSED

Belden Fields

"A considerable number of the prisoners fell, after even a short confinement, into a semi-fatuous condition, from which it was next to impossible to arouse them, and others became violently insane; others still, committed suicide; while those who stood the ordeal better were not generally reformed, and in most cases did not recover sufficient mental activity to be of any subsequent service to the community." Supreme Court Judge Samuel Freeman Miller, writing about solitary confinement, in *Medley* Petitioner 134 U.S. 1690 (1890)

In his *Champaign-Urbana News-Gazette* commentary of April 1, George Welborn, the first warden at Tamms Supermax Prison, argues that Governor Quinn's decision to close the prison was driven by politics. More precisely, he claims that the governor is trying to please "his Chicago constituency groups" and cites a number of groups defending civil and human rights that have offices in Chicago.

I cannot say how the governor weighed economic and human rights concerns. But I can say that there are serious human rights violations going on when prisoners are held in 24-hour isolation, some since the prison was opened fourteen years ago. The prisoners do not even see those who bring their meals, which are shoved through holes in the steel doors of their 7X12-foot cells.

When such supermax institutions were created in the 1980s and 1990s, the claim was made that only the "worst of the worst" who threatened or committed physical harm to guards and other prisoners would be put into them. Research has shown that in some cases just irritating a guard can get one a transfer to a supermax institution.

The most important consideration is the psychological damage done to people who are placed in these conditions, some of whom already have undiagnosed and untreated mental illness. Dr. Terry Kupers, a psychiatrist who specializes in the effects of solitary confinement, found serious mental illness among prisoners in Mississippi's Unit 32 in Parchman. These manifested themselves in hallucination, throwing of feces, and howling at night. There have been instances of suicide, attempted suicide, and self-castration. Christopher Epps, Mississippi's commissioner of corrections and president-elect of the American Correctional Association, at first was a strong supporter of such confinement. "That was the culture, and I was part of it," he says. But based upon many years of experience with it in Mississippi, he now strongly opposes it: "If you treat people like animals, that's exactly the way they'll behave." (*New York Times*, March 10, 2012). And some of these people will someday be released out into the public, made all the more dangerous by their confinement.

No other Western nation uses such isolation for such long periods and it has deservedly cost us internationally. Last month the U.N. special investigative rapporteur on torture and cruel and unusual punishment pressed the U.N.'s Human Rights Council to take up the issue of round-the-clock isolation from all human contact as a cruel and inhumane form of torture. In 2010, the European Court of Human Rights prevented four terrorism suspects from being deported from Britain to the U.S. because of the conditions in the federal supermax prison in Florence, Colorado, where the accused terrorists might have ended up.

So, Mr. Welborn, while it must be difficult for you to accept the fact that the institution that you headed was engaged in inhumane activity, it is not the case that only human rights organizations in Chicago think that this is so. Some of us downstate agree, the president-elect of the American Correctional Association who had previously been a strong proponent now thinks so, psychiatrists and psychologists think so, and people in the international community think so.

Justice Miller had it right way back in 1890. It is you sir, not the governor, who has tried to make this into a politically partisan issue.

Belden Fields

(Belden Fields is a Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Illinois, Urbana, author of *Rethinking Human Rights for the New Millennium* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2003), and a member of C/U Citizens for Peace and Justice, which endorses the views expressed in this commentary)

I'm writing to voice my support for the CLOSURE of Tamm's maximum security facility. It is an inhumane and violent institution.

Please do the right thing and shut it down and consider real, community based, restorative solutions.

Carrie Kaufman

Please give serious consideration to closing Tamms. When we treat others inhumanly we ourselves are less human.

Thank you,
Carol Spiegel
Oak Park, IL

Dear Members of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability:

I urge you to support the governor's plan to close Tamms supermax.

We humans are social creatures: and in order to thrive and to heal we need to be around our own kind, connecting and learning by example. To rob someone away and force them into darkness, confinement and isolation is deceiving ourselves that this is any solution. We are further driving them away: we are making monsters where human animals can stand.

I urge you to vote for closure. Thank you so much for your time and attention.

Sincerely,
Bianca Ballara

Please vote to close Tamms because it causes extreme suffering and lasting mental damage to people in state custody. Alternatives are cheaper, safer and reduce violence.

Albert Stabler

Chicago

I respectfully request the closure of this dehumanizing facility. In virtue of the fact that the human cost to many is greater than the economic benefit to a few.

Gerardo Ramirez.

I'm writing to ask you to vote to close Tamms prison. It's a waste on so many levels: it's a waste of state budgetary resources when the state is in serious budgetary trouble. It's a waste of land and material resources. Worst of all, however, and the most important reason to close Tamms is the waste and destruction of people's lives.

Tamms is a daily torture for the prisoners, and it is a shame and a crime that the State of Illinois keeps Tamms Supermax open. Please vote to close Tamms.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Blair,
Chicago

Hello,

I'm writing to urge you to close Tamms Supermax prison. It's a waste of money and it is a shameful way to "correct" human behavior. The Dept. of Correction needs to live up to its name and actively work to rehabilitate prisoners. Tamms does not do this, and any of us would be horrified if we were to be up in that situation. My own mother suffers from mental illness. I know for sure she would resort to all kinds of horrible behaviors if locked in a box for hours and days on end. She has health insurance, she gets intensive treatment. It costs money to do this. And Tamms is an example of money wasted on poor treatment.

Correction officers do need to find other jobs. We can find safe and secure work for them and give prisoners the treatment and attention they need to be safe in our communities. And, indeed, many of them will return to our communities.

Please close this costly, useless and harmful facility.

Thank you,
Sarah Ross

Hello, my name is Billy Dee and I am a resident of Chicago, IL.

I have learned about the issue of the Tamms Supermax prison in downstate Illinois, and have been horrified at what I have learned. I have been shocked to learn about the long-term isolation at Tamms, a type of incarceration WELL KNOWN to cause or exaggerate mental-health issues, and which is considered to be a form of TORTURE by the United Nations. I am completely ashamed to pay taxes to a government which supports this prison, and feel that Tamms must be closed. In addition to the damage that this type of long term solitary isolation causes for the men incarcerated, the lack of human contact between family members and prisons destroys family connections. If a human being is left to rot away in solitary isolation for years on end in a prison which is likely far away from any relatives, friends, or family members, this human being is experiencing a type of injustice that I do not believe our society should ever support. No matter what one's views are regarding the criminality of each individual person incarcerated at Tamms, no matter how troubling the crimes that these people have committed, I wish to believe that I live in a state which is dedicated to human rights and human decency. In this moment where this state is obliged to make cuts in the budget, an expensive and inhumane institution should be a clear choice for closure. I support the decision to close Tamms with my whole heart. Learning about this issue, and actually having the opportunity to meet family members of men incarcerated at Tamms, and even a couple of formerly incarcerated men who spent time in this institution, has been a profound human experience for me. Learning about the damaging effects that this prison has on an emotional, physical and spiritual level to all whose lives are touched by this has solidified my position on this issue. Although I have not been incarcerated myself, nor do I have family members at Tamms, this issue has struck a nerve with me. Although I understand that the people of the town of Tamms are afraid of this prison closure due to job losses in their town, I cannot believe that a town whose economy is built on a controversial prison have a great deal of economic stability in any case. I also feel that building an economy on an institution which does not respect or enforce basic human rights must in many ways be emotionally and spiritually damaging for the community of Tamms. What types of behaviors do people bring home from work at a prison, when they are forced to treat people in a dehumanizing and degrading way all day? I sincerely hope that the community of Tamms can find another more sustainable economic option, however, even in the interest of the long term well being of this community I think the prison closure is a must. In the interest of human decency, and our collective spiritual and emotional health in this state, we must close this prison. This issue matters to me, to my neighbors, my friends, my coworkers. This is any issue that matters to this state, and I hope that you will use your power in government to be strong and stand for the humane and decent position on this issue.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely, Billy Dee

I am sending this email because I am a mother of an inmate and to me it is inhuman to keep any one locked down for 23-24 hours @ any given time and not to have any contact with others only staff members who do not have their best interest only because it is a job do they care. This will cause serious mental damage in the long run.

Nedra Mixon

As a Quaker, I am offended by the conditions suffered by prisoners at Tamms Supermax. I propose that it either be reformed or closed.

Maurine Pyle

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in regards to the proposed closure of the Tamms Correctional Center. I am a proponent of the facility being closed for a myriad of reasons, fiscal and social.

Tamms is one of the most expensive prisons to run in the state of Illinois and while our state is facing the worst financial struggles in decades, it only makes sense to cut the most expensive budget items. In order to make the most effective decisions for the state in this time of crisis it is important to look at what will make the most impact. If truly looking at the best interest of the citizens of the state it is necessary to look at what will still offer the citizens important and valuable services.

Tamms is certainly not one of those valuable services, fiscally, but also socially. The prison itself is a mental health nightmare. While the prison is fully staffed with mental health workers, the services they provide are rudimentary at best. In personally reading letters from prisoners in Tamms, it is clear that after prolonged periods of time at the facility mental capacity of the inmates diminishes. The amount of distress that this facility causes on the inmates is shocking and detrimental to their ability to come out of prison as healthy citizens ready to re-enter society.

There is nothing beneficial about Tamms. There is nothing done at Tamms that cannot be done at other Correctional Centers in Illinois. While many are understaffed by closing Tamms those employees would be able to transfer to other prisons and allow for those facilities to become better staffed, and able to provide better services to a greater amount of people.

I see no reason to keep this atrocity of a prison open and I urge you to go along with Quinn and

CLOSE Tamms Correctional Facility, a blemish on the state of Illinois and the budget of the state of Illinois.

Respectfully and sincerely,

Aaron Stevens

I support Governor Quinn's proposal to close Tamms C-Max because in its 14 years it has only served to breed & exacerbate mental illness in Illinois' prisoners thus rendering them even less able to function--a grievous error on the part of IDOC given that most of these inmates will be released back into society--and suck hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars away from social services and education, which are the real solutions to lowering the crime rate and prison population.

The answer to Illinois' overcrowding and prison violence problems is not indefinite periods of cold storage for random inmates. AFSME and the downstate legislators are opposing the closure of Tamms C-Max due to a fragile economy which is balanced precariously on the backs of Illinois' inmates. The town of Tamms deserves better jobs than the jobs Tamms provides, which require folks to suspend disbelief and devalue their fellow citizens for a paycheck.

We're a better state than the existence of Tamms C-Max would have you believe. Illinois has abolished the death penalty and provides universal healthcare for children. Legislatively we are capable of great compassion and care for all of our citizens, including those who are incarcerated.

Closing Tamms C-Max would set a precedent for other states who are struggling with budget problems and prison overcrowding--supermax facilities are not sustainable solutions for these problems and Illinois is seeking more affordable, more sustainable solutions. We can model how to get out from under a supermax facility, save money and reduce the number of Illinois citizens who are incarcerated every year.

Thank you, COGSFA, for considering closing Tamms C-Max, which costs an inordinate amount of money to run each year, is less than half full, violates basic human rights, has been decried by the UN, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, and reflects so badly on the state of Illinois.

Mary Bowman, R.N.

March 28, 2012

To the members of the Commission for Government Forecasting and Accountability:

My name is Beverly K. Watson. I am a resident of Chicago, IL and also a mother of a Tamms prisoner. I want to share with you my feelings about the proposed closing of TAMMS.

When I heard that you were going to propose the closing of TAMMS, it was hard to believe. I felt as if my prayers had been answered. I have been conditioned not to ask for too much in the world. I have always been a hard worker. After 33 years with the Chicago Police Department and serving the citizens of Chicago as a police officer, Youth Officer and a Detective, I find myself in the same position of many of my customers and clients. I find myself as the mother of a prisoner. A role that was totally unexpected, totally humiliating and which I have accepted and must live with.

My son was born to two police officers. He was born into a good, religious home, with parents, grandparents, and a brother. Funny how two children can be raised the same and end up totally different. His brother is a graduate of the University of Illinois and an engineer with the Department of Defense. He has never been arrested, has made a wonderful life for himself in the New Jersey/Philadelphia area and they had the same opportunities. They just made different choices. One never knows when a loved-one will go into prison. No mother thinks it will happen. That is something you should all think about.

When people see my son, they simply see an Illinois Department of Corrections prisoner with a number. When I see my son, who I have not seen in more than a year, I see a broken human being that saw the violence in the streets of Chicago and internalized it. I see a man that has spent most of his life institutionalized with behavior problems and mental health issues.

I only want the best for my son and the sons and daughters of other Illinois citizens. I want a chance for them to learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens of the State of Illinois. I also know that that will never happen at TAMMS. It is an inhumane warehousing situation that has contributed greatly to his mental illness. I still believe in my son, and would like nothing more than to see him as a successful, productive individual that contributes, every day, to the success of others.

That will never happen if he has no contact with another human being for 23 hours of each day. The money that is wasted in warehousing the prisoners at TAMMS can be better spent on improving the outlook of the prisoners in the State of Illinois through education, re-entry skills and psychological treatment.

I never had hope until the plan was announced to close TAMMS. I am so proud of the Governor for this proposal and pray, every night, that this committee has the fortitude to follow through on his recommendation and close TAMMS. I will keep you, as well as my son, in my prayers.

Beverly K. Watson

12221 S. Harvard Ave., Chicago, IL 60628

There is absolutely no justification for keeping a torture facility open. It is indeed a sad state of our society if we rely on institutions like this for JOBS! No job is worth the devastation caused to human beings and their families. Please, please vote your conscience and close it, NOW!

Mary Klonowski

Dear Members of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability:

I urge you to support the governor's plan to close Tamms supermax. I am an attorney with the Transformative Justice Law Project of Illinois where we provide free holistic criminal legal services to transgender and gender non-conforming people, many of whom are incarcerated in IDOC facilities.

From my legal work with prisoners throughout Illinois, I am well aware that the conditions of Tamms, especially that of prolonged isolation, leads to suicide attempts, self-mutilation, and other mental breakdowns and extreme suffering. The effect of this form of punishment is felt long after prisoners leave Tamms and impacts their re-entry on the outside. The damage caused by long-term isolation is permanent, traumatic, and inhumane. For this reason, international human rights monitors, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have condemned Tamms after finding the conditions at Tamms to be a form of state-sponsored torture.

Not only does long-term solitary isolation cause long-term damage to the men who are detained at Tamms, it is also incredibly expensive. The alternatives to long-term isolation are both cheaper for the state and safer for prisoners. In fact, there is a trend to shut down supermax prisons. States such as Mississippi and Virginia have closed or greatly reduced their supermax prisons.

I urge you to vote for closure. Thank you so much for your time and attention. Please don't hesitate to contact me with questions.

Sincerely,

Owen Daniel-McCarter, Esq.
Project Attorney
Collective Member

Transformative Justice Law Project of Illinois

2040 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Chicago, IL 60647

Dear CGFA Members:

I am writing to express my support for the closure of Tamms. I attended the hearings at Shawnee Community College and experienced the tense exchange of testimony. I do not envy you in the decision you have to make and I hope that you are able to consider all of the facts and recommend the closing of this expensive and unnecessary facility. Tamms was built for the purpose of not just social isolation, but extreme sensory deprivation in its structure and policies. This form of treatment should be considered a form of torture and not an ideal way to house our prisoners, not to mention that the cost to handle prisoners in this way is astronomically expensive for the citizens of this state. I understand that the corrections officers in these facilities take pride in their jobs and feel that they are providing a service to the community. I do not want to take away this sense of pride by supporting the closure of Tamms, but I do want the prison system to take into consideration that there are other ways to manage our prison population and allow the corrections officers to do so. There is mounting evidence that reveals the negative impact of solitary confinement on the inmates housed in these supermax facilities. There are a few former prisoners who have been released from the facility that have managed to make a life for themselves, but not without continued struggle from the effects of isolation and sensory deprivation. These men are the great exception, not the rule for the the inmates released from Tamms. There is also proof of alternatives in the success of other states who have either eliminated or reduced the use of solitary confinement without reducing the safety of other inmates and corrections officers. I understand that the individuals housed in Tamms committed crimes and received sentences for those crimes, but it seems there have been many men sent to Tamms to justify its existence and prove a point, rather than for just and legal reasons. I do not disagree that there are prisoners who are extremely dangerous and need special attention, but I also think it is dangerous to extend that fear and treatment of these very few offenders to the general population and more specifically our mentally ill inmates. Of course locking people up for 23 hours out of the day will keep them out of trouble, but this end does not justify the means. There are practices that are extreme beyond necessity (both in policies and cost) and deserve rethinking. Tamms is the epitome of these extreme and unnecessary practices.

The more knowledge I gain regarding the policies of Tamms the more appalled I get. Closing this facility is the right thing to do, financially and morally.

Ashley Meyer

Please vote to close Tamms Supermax. The prison is costing taxpayers enormous amounts of money and is not fulfilling its intended purpose. Prolonged isolation is torture. Punishment and rehabilitation can be done at less cost and without dehumanizing prisoners and society. Let's not be on the wrong side of history.

Thank you,
Rebecca Zorach
Chicago, IL

Dear Sirs,

I herewith urge you to vote for closing Tamms as soon as possible.

This kind of isolation causes extreme suffering to people and especially since they are locked up in this isolation for not only months, but years and even decades. This is cruel and inhumane and does only cause more health problems on the inmates.

There are cheaper and also safe alternatives to use. This place is just no longer an option for punishment. It is a torture chamber and not appropriate for the times we live in!

Thank you very much!

Best regards
Renate Mari

Dear Committee,

I urge you disingenuous for our nation whose government criticizes other countries for their harsh treatment of prisoners would be doing the same harsh treatment to their very own citizens. I implore you to do what you can to close this inhumane prison and all of them like it.

Sincerely, Sister Kathleen Desautels, SP

I support closing Tamms. It costs far too much money and keeping people in solitary confinement is inhumane.

John Bartlett

Dear Members of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability:

I have followed the impact of Tamms Supermax prison on its prisoners for quite a few years now and have heard firsthand from prisoners how extremely damaging this place has been to them.

I have received letters from men who have mutilated themselves and who feel their sanity slipping from the impact of longterm isolation.

Tamms is a horrible place that needs to be closed so that it can be looked at historically as one of Illinois' most terrible mistakes - one which should never be repeated.

Thank you for your consideration,

Marc Fischer
Chicago, IL

It's time to close TAMMs. As an Illinois resident for over 20 years I want TAMMS closed. It's the source and cause of great suffering and damage to my fellow Illinoisans and their families because of the extreme isolation and lack of human contact. Illinois can do better and needs to comply with our own State Constitution requiring incarceration to be rehabilitative. There are other alternatives than having a prison like TAMMs that has earned such a terrible reputation because of the types of human rights violations that are going on there.

Please do the right thing and close TAMMS.

Thank you.

Catherine McMillan, RN, BSN, MHA
6300 N Sheridan
Chicago IL 60660

I'm asking that you vote to close Tamms.

Tamms causes extreme suffering and lasting mental damage to people in state custody. People who have served their time and debt to society shouldn't end up damaged as human beings for the rest of their lives.

There are alternatives that are cheaper, safer and reduce violence! Stop State violence and instead help reintegrate people into society as productive citizens.

Thank you.

Darby J. Tillis
1444 Sawyer Ave.
Chicago IL 60680

Dear Members of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability:

I urge you to support Governor Quinn's plan to close Tamms supermax.

Prolonged isolation, such as that instituted at Tamms for 23 hours per day, leads to suicide attempts, self-mutilation, hallucinations, smearing of feces, other mental breakdowns and extreme suffering. This offends basic decency, and it is bad policy. Last year, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on torture Juan E. Méndez specifically highlighted the harm of supermax prisons and called for a global ban on solitary confinement in excess of 15 days.

I urge you to vote for closure. Thank you so much for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Anne Elizabeth Moore

Dear Members of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability:

I urge you to support the governor's plan to close Tamms Supermax.

Tamms has caused suffering to me and my family for all the reasons outlined below. I moved backed to Chicago five years ago with hopes to visit my brother. At the time he was an inmate at Joliet Correctional Center. A few months after returning, I receive a letter from him from Tamms with no explanation as to why he was transferred and not to come and visit him because it was no place he want me to see. Initially, I thought he was saying this because he did not want me or other family members to see him behind bars which we had done in the pass; but I respected his wishes for a minute. This was only because I was without a car and needed to work on obtaining one. In the meantime, I begin to research organizations that assisted families who had a family members incarcerated. All the organizations that I contacted including churches stated "they did not visit Tamms". Some organizations had never heard of Tamms other stated it was seven hours from

Chicago and they did not travel that far. The tone of each speaker was very distant which made me start a new search to learn about Tamms and wild was I shock!

After reading and learning about Tamms, I somewhat understood why I received the distant tone. Tamms reads like a horror story but I thank God for Tamms Year Ten organization that has been instrumental in organizing change at this institution and now the closing of Tamms which I am in total agreements.

As you read the many reasons why Tamms should be closed, I ask that you put yourself in each family member shoes and make the right decision to close this institution:

- Prolonged isolation leads to suicide attempts, self-mutilation, and hallucination, smearing of feces, other mental breakdowns and extreme suffering. This offends basic decency, and it is bad policy.
- Tamms has become a dumping ground for people with mental illnesses. It is a vicious cycle. The longer a man is held in solitary, the more abnormal his behavior becomes, and he is punished with more time in solitary. Break the cycle and spend the money on treatment.
- The Supermax causes lasting physiological and psychological damage and impedes reentry to society or to other prisons. These men are returning to our neighborhoods and communities--40% will do so within the next 20 years. We want them to come back intact--not mentally impaired.
- The majority of the men at Tamms are just like those in regular Illinois prisons. Many men have been transferred from Tamms in the past 4 years, and some of them end up at medium security prisons.
- Tamms is the obvious prison to close. It is expensive, inefficient and harmful. Closing it will not affect overcrowding or cut essential social services. We already have an all-segregation prison-- Pontiac.
- There are only 180 prisoners in the Supermax. If they are transferred to Pontiac, we can redirect 27 million dollars.
- Alternatives are cheaper and safer. There is a trend to shut down Supermax prisons. Mississippi, Maine and Virginia have closed or greatly reduced their supermax prisons and not only saved money but reduced violence. Colorado opened a supermax 18 months ago and has just decided to close it!
- International human rights monitors, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have condemned Tamms because they consider the conditions to be cruel, inhuman and degrading, and a form of torture.
- Last year, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on torture Juan E. Méndez specifically highlighted the harm of supermax prisons and called for a global ban on solitary confinement in excess of 15 days. I understand a few people will possibly be laid off and at this time I have been laid off for a couple of months. No, it doesn't feel good and it takes faith to make it through but will I want to sacrifice

having a job and keeping an institution like Tamms open so I can receive a paycheck? Especially, when I am aware of the circumstance and how inmates are treated. For those who might lose their job, I truly believe that God will take care of your house because of the sacrifice you made to do what is humanly right.

My brother has been incarcerated since he was 16 years old. He is now 54 years old. I am not writing to argue his case; however, if he can't be release; can he be given the opportunity to do his time not mentality impaired because of the conditions of Tamms? Again, I urge you to vote for the closure of Tamms!

Thank you so much for your time and attention.

Sincerely,
Mannett Foster

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to request that you close Tamms. It is a prison that has served it usefulness and is now doing more harm than good to its offenders. It is not fully housed and is very costly to run. Close it!

Dee L. Battaglia

Please take the reasonable, humane, and just step of closing the Tamms super-maximum prison. It would represent small, but significant, movement toward facing our addiction to incarceration. Thanks.

Doug Thomson

Douglas Thomson, Ph.D.
Professor of Criminal Justice and Sociology
Chicago State University (HWH 229)

Hi,

I wish to express my support 4 the closure of the cams supermax prison. Not only is an evening, but it does not contribute to the safety of our communities. I have studied mental health, seminal justice, and

violence 4 more than 2 decades.TAMMS destroys people, And these people are returned to our communities.

Article I.11 of the illinois state constitution Says that persons shall not be confined except for the purpose of returning them to the community. TAMMS Violate that principal.

Gary M. McClelland, PhD
Department of Psychiatry
Feinberg School of Medicine
Northwestern University

Hello

I feel strongly that Tamms should never have been built. There is no need to have mentally ill men getting worse or sane men going insane, in the name of security.

Also I know at the beginning it was built as a more short term "segregation" stay of 6 to 12 months. Somehow all that was forgotten and men spent over 10 years there, including clearly mentally ill men. The clinical staff do not seem to have a handle on basic mental illness.

Holley McCree, MSW

My Brother has been at Tamm's for almost 3 yrs now he got transferred there for something he didnt do they said it would be only 1 yr and he would be transferred to another Facility .

That never happened in fact we have been trying to visit for the past 2 1/2 yrs now and we havent had a responce ...He has become very ill he has tried killing himself a few time also hes been on Medical furlough ..My brother hasnt been the same now hes is in the Psychiatric ward the isolation at Tamms has ruined him mentally ...I strongly believe that thats an evil place to be its not healthy..Also being mistreated and treated like an Animal that is not a a Correctional facility im sick to my stomach to know how inmates get treated how are they suppose to come back out to society when they are abused Mentally and physically ...and end up insaneMy Brother is suffering at Tamms and im scared for his life my brother will never be the same

Isabella Estrada

Dear Senator Frerichs:

I would like to express my strong agreement with the governor's proposal to close the Tamms facility. Primarily, my reason is that solitary confinement over a period of years does extreme psychological harm to persons that to me is inhumane, unnecessary, and counterproductive. Secondly, the cost of this type of treatment is a great deal more than would be rehabilitative services, opportunities for group counselling, education, drug treatment, exercise with others, recreational reading - activities that have some potential for safely returning people to society. Even if these things cannot be provided, it really can't be justified for the state to exclude prisoners from human contact to the extent that this facility does, particularly if the duration is indefinite & irrevocable.

Sincerely,

Nancy Stagg
Urbana, IL

To whom it may concern:

I would greatly appreciate if you would close Tamm's. Not only are the inmates treated inhumane, but the state can save considerable money by doing this.

These inmates can be placed in other correctional centers and the guards will still be safe.

Please close this as many of the leading civil rights organizations feel this should be closed. The ACLU for one is working to help close Tamm's.

Please close.

Sincerely,

Keri Brown

Dear Members of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability:

I urge you to support the governor's plan to close Tamms supermax.

- Prolonged isolation leads to suicide attempts, self-mutilation, hallucinations, smearing of feces, other mental breakdowns and extreme suffering. This offends basic decency, and it is bad policy.

- Tamms has become a dumping ground for people with mental illnesses. It is a vicious cycle. The longer a man is held in solitary, the more abnormal his behavior becomes, and he is punished with more time in solitary. Break the cycle and spend the money on treatment.
- The supermax causes lasting physiological and psychological damage and impedes reentry to society or to other prisons. These men are returning to our neighborhoods and communities--40% will do so within the next 20 years. We want them to come back intact--not mentally impaired.
- The majority of the men at Tamms are just like those in regular Illinois prisons. Many men have been transferred from Tamms in the past 4 years, and some of them end up at medium security prisons.
- Tamms is the obvious prison to close. It is expensive, inefficient and harmful. Closing it will not affect overcrowding or cut essential social services. We already have an all-segregation prison--Pontiac.
- There are only 180 prisoners in the supermax. If they are transferred to Pontiac, we can redirect 27 million dollars.
- Alternatives are cheaper and safer. There is a trend to shut down supermax prisons. Mississippi, Maine and Virginia have closed or greatly reduced their supermax prisons and not only saved money but reduced violence. Colorado opened a supermax 18 months ago and has just decided to close it!
- International human rights monitors, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have condemned Tamms because they consider the conditions to be cruel, inhuman and degrading, and a form of torture.
- Last year, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on torture Juan E. Méndez specifically highlighted the harm of supermax prisons and called for a global ban on solitary confinement in excess of 15 days.

I urge you to vote for closure. Thank you so much for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

milti leonard

To whom it may concern:

I would greatly appreciate if you would close Tamm's. Not only are the inmates treated inhumane, but the state can save considerable money by doing this.

These inmates can be placed in other correctional centers and the guards will still be safe.

Please close this as many of the leading civil rights organizations feel this should be closed. The ACLU for one is working to help close Tamm's.

Please close.

Sincerely,
Nancy Brook

Dear Members of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability,

I urge you to support the governor's plan to close Tamms supermax. Tamms is the obvious prison to close.

Tamms is expensive, inefficient and harmful. Closing it will not affect overcrowding or cut essential social services. We already have an all-segregation prison--Pontiac. There are only 180 prisoners in the supermax. If they are transferred to Pontiac, we can redirect 27 million dollars! Plus, there are alternatives that are cheaper and safer. Mississippi, Maine and Virginia have closed or greatly reduced their supermax prisons and not only saved money but reduced violence. Colorado opened a supermax 18 months ago and has just decided to close it. Human rights monitors, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have condemned Tamms because they consider the conditions to be cruel, inhuman and degrading, and a form of torture. Last year, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on torture Juan E. Méndez specifically highlighted the harm of supermax prisons and called for a global ban on solitary confinement in excess of 15 days.

So I urge you to vote for closure. Thank you so much for your time and attention.

Sincerely,
Scott McFarland

To the Member of the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability,

My name is Rhonna Medlin. I am a Registered Nurse at Tamms Correctional Center. I have a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing degree from Murray State University. Through the last 25 years of my career, I've served in the United States Navy, taught nursing classes at Shawnee Community College, worked in hospitals, home health and hospice settings, working my way up to management positions. Finally, 7 years ago, I landed at Tamms

There is a reason that I listed my education and work experience. I've known many very well educated people. They can recite from manuals, different studies and testing to make their point, but they don't have the common sense to turn a door knob to get out of a room. I attended the COGFA hearing on the closure of Tamms Correctional on April 2. I saw and heard a panel of well educated people recite the reasons why Tamms should be closed. My question is, do they KNOW Tamms? Do they know the type of inmates that reside at Tamms? Do they have a clue as to why these inmates were placed at Tamms, or why they are in prison? How about these educated people meet with the families of the victims and discuss their reasons for closing Tamms with them.

I heard how segregation and lack of human contact can cause mental illness. Bet that they didn't know that the most severe mental health inmate was not diagnosed until he was sent to Tamms due to that lack of attention and care received at an over-populated and understaffed prison up north. The inmate population is also getting older. There are multiple health problems to deal with along with mental health. The inmates know this. They also have served time in these other prisons and know how they operate. They're worried, afraid they won't get the care or medications that they need. Some have already experienced this when being housed at other prisons for short periods of time during court writs. They don't get their medications while there. There are inmates at Tamms that don't want to leave.

The inmates at Tamms are not completely without human contact. There are 10 cells to a wing. I've heard them yelling out ball scores, playing chess with each other. I even heard an inmate trying to teach others Spanish--amusing... Then there are the really interesting inmates. The ones that stand on their toilet to talk to others through the air vents. They communicate by hand signals to inmates on other wings or pods through those teeny-tiny window in their cells. There is yelling, kicking, banging, arguing, name-calling. Pretty much the actions of 2 year olds.

I read an article after the hearing regarding a demonstration by one of the speakers of the violence these inmates are capable of. The people wanting to close Tamms were startled, scared... I seriously doubt that. If these people are related to or know one of the inmates at Tamms, they've seen it before. Probably in their own home. There is not a week that goes by that I'm not threatened by an inmate. Ofcourse Tamms is tightly controlled, so their threats consist of throwing urine, feces, blood, or even spitting. Yes, I have been assaulted in this manner. It's just....nasty. A mother of one the inmates testified that she was worried about her son's well-being, he had lost weight, he didn't look right. This is the same inmate that runs to the front of his cell and masterbates when I enter the wing to pass medication. Real classy.... Again. actions of a 2 year old.

Then there are the inmates that come to the cell door when you enter the wing. They watch you, every move you make, waiting for you to make a mistake or let down your guard. I've got the good sense not to make a mistake, not to get too comfortable, or not be aware of my surroundings. But then, I've got the sense to turn a door knob to get out of a room.

Tamms can be a dangerous place to work. But, it is new, it's controlled, it was built to handle the danger. It is also staffed with the most dedicated, highly trained, and absolutley incredible people, that I have ever had the priveledge to work with. Tamms was built for a reason. A reason the alot of highly educated people seem to have forgotten. Or, maybe it's been so long since someone has had to pay the ultimate sacrifice, that the victims and their families have been forgotten. Shame on those well educated people!!! Tamms has done it's job well, Tamms remembers

Sincerely,
Rhonna Medlin RN, BSN

Dear Commission,

I have a fiance in Tamms who has been there 7 years. When I visit him in the middle of conversations he tells me as he runs his hands through his hair as rubbing his head, how he just doesn't know how much he can endure. He can't sleep, He has thoughts of suicide he feels sick to his stomach he also tells me he just doesn't know how much longer he can endure the harshness of being in cold isolation. He speaks to me about things that I cannot speak about here. I see him suffering. After experiencing this, I am very against isolation. I see the effect it has.

Another thing his color of skin is very ugly greenish beige for lack of light or sun. He never sees the outside. It's a very horrible inhumane cold storage. They keep them isolated like animals.

Throughout the years, I can see his weight drop tremendously.

Please understand that this is about real people and real families. No person or animal should be in a place like that and no one should have to live with the knowledge that their son or loved-one is there. This is not what corrections about and this is not why people were sent to prison. Please, shut it down.

Thank you so much for your time.
Olga Aguilera

Dear Legislators,

My brother never received a disciplinary ticket the whole time he was incarcerated before he was transferred to Tamms. He was there for weeks before he was told why he had been transferred there, and then he was given something in writing informing him that he would only be there a year, which is what most of the inmates at Tamms had been told only to realize that they would be there indefinitely.

In the 18 months that he's been at Tamms he's lost 40 pounds and although he tries to reassure my family that he is o.k., his predicament torments my mother and frustrates the rest of my family. Imagine knowing that your son or brother is in a box without human interaction for one year, and that this year will turn into many years.

We hear the constant refrain that "Tamms is for the worst of the worst" when in actuality, an inmate doesn't have to have a physical or even verbal altercation with anyone, not another inmate or even IDOC staff to find himself buried in the tombs of the IDOC, which we know as Tamms. More than half the men there have not.

Mahatma Ghandi said something like, "The greatness of a Nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its powerless are treated. The more voiceless a man is, the more he deserves protection by man from the cruelty of man."

My position is that the ideology of Tamms, from its inception, even with the stipulation that inmates should not be held there for more than a year, is a glaring example of man's inhumanity to man.

We need protection from what the state is doing to our family members. We ask for your help.

Our great state has taken a hit on the world stage, we are known as a corrupt, immoral state. The closure of Tamms allows this State to take a step in the right direction. Please close Tamms.

Janice Burnom

Dear Members of CGFA,

My son has been in Tamms for 7 years. It is simply not right to keep a person locked up with no human contact. He is having trouble talking, he can't remember things, and he is having anxiety and panic from being at Tamms. This prison has made him worse. I just don't know what to do anymore. The state is doing this to our sons. You are in a position to stop it.

My son is always hungry and has lost a lot of weight. I don't know if this is depression or small portions but I talk to other moms and their sons have lost weight too. I can either send him money for commissary or not see him because I am on a fixed income and can't do both. It is very hard for me to get down there because it is a two day trip and there is no public transportation. Many families can't make the visit at all.

I could say a lot more about this prison but I think you can intuitively understand that this is wrong and that we need to stop doing this to the men at Tamms and to all their families.

Please vote to close Tamms.

Sincerely,
Geneva Mullins

"Nearly all men can stand adversity. If you want to test a man's character give him power." - Abraham Lincoln

"They are criminals. Let them know we know their criminals." -Alex Jones

"Make crime pay" -Will Rogers

"Murder is unique in that it abolishes the party it injures, so that society has to take the place of the victim and on his behalf demand atonement or grant forgiveness; it is the one crime in which society has a direct interest." -W.H. Auden

"Don't let the victims become the accused." -Elsie Wilbanks

"The punishment should fit the crime." -Corrine Brown

"Disgrace does not consist in the punishment, but in the crime." -Vittorio Alfieri

"If Tamms were open in 1984 when my father was killed, when I was 8 years old, then he would be here today." -Cecille Harbison-Carnelle

Show the criminals in the State of Illinois that law abiding citizens run this state...not the criminals. Keep Tamms Supermax Open!

-Randall Price April 21, 2012

Submitted by Keith Clarke

To Whom It May Concern on the Committee:

Tamms is increasing PTSD, and anti-social behavior. The men experience isolation not only from people in society but also isolation from the other people within the prison system. In a normal maximum security prison, you talk to the staff, you see other men. Prisoners need to be with other people within their own structure. There are people that can help them overcome their behavior problems. They will only get worse by themselves. We should not be making things worse. That is not the function of our government!

Please close Tamms.

Judy Gonzalez
Chicago, Illinois

I know what solitary confinement is. I know what it feels like to sleep on a concrete floor for 90 days because you didn't want to participate in something. I know how destructive that is. What happens after that? Your understanding is zero. If you had anything positive to offer someone after you do that, they do not want to hear it. Now multiply that by years and years. This prison is set up to make your life impossible.

I am grateful to being exposed to positive people doing positive things in life. My concept is live and let live. Tamms should be torn down. We have mentally ill people and homeless out there with no housing. But you can find money and housing for incarceration and a place like Tamms?

Please set the priorities of the state and shut Tamms down.

William Gonzalez, Chicago IL

My name is Herman Townsend. I am the father of a Tamms prisoner. I will be brief.

Long-term imprisonment at Tamms affects the mind and it is affecting my son. The men there have no civil rights.

My son should have been transferred out after one year, but instead he has been there almost 14 years. What could the rationale for holding him there for 14 years be except to keep that prison open.

My son, like many men at Tamms, was still a teenager when he was incarcerated. Since he has been at Tamms, he has not seen his own father or his own son for 10 years. The visitation policies are too strict.

Now I am on oxygen and I believe his only hope of leaving Tamms, and my only hope of seeing my son again is if you close Tamms.

Sincerely,
Herman Townsend

Tamms is an insult to human dignity and a deliberate violation of human rights. No person should be put through such treatment and be left to a state of feeling that powerless. The institution isn't helping anybody and is a colossal waste of money to maintain.

Jenny Kim

Hello,

I urge you to close Tamms Supermax Prison. This facility does not aim to rehabilitate prisoners, but to torture them through the use of isolation. Isolation is know to cause mental illness!

I am a lifetime member of the AFT and am the head union steward in the building where I teach. I do not condone the actions of the prison guards and other personnel at Tamms because I believe HUMAN RIGHTS trump workers rights. There are also many other facilities where the union workers could be placed when Tamms closes.

I have called and email Mike Frierichs on the issue many times, but he has not responded to me, so I am taking this opportunity to email the committee.

Thank you,

Ellen S. Baranowski
Urbana, IL

Dear Gov. Quinn,

I believe the Tamms prison needs to be closed. It is too inhumane for punishment. The solitary confinement for years – some for 12 yrs. in unjust, unchristian, inhumane.

The Adult Transition Centers are assisting the incarcerated to re-enter society. The ATC in Decatur has some very impressive statistics to prove they are helping the prisoners make the necessary adjustments and fulfilling obligations. I hope and pray you do not close the ATC esp. the Decatur center.

I trust you will do the right thing and make good and just decisions re: the above.

Thank you and God bless your efforts.

Sister JoAn Schullian, OSF
Pastoral Associate,
Our Lady of Lourdes Church
3850 Lourdes Drive
Decatur, IL 62526

I respectfully request the closure of this dehumanizing facility. In virtue of the fact that the human cost to many is greater than the economic benefit to a few.

Gerard "Jerry" Ramirez.

Dear Committee

I have heard there is a question of whether to close TAMMS.

In rich times, you can waste money. If you leave this open in support of the unions, you lose any shred of credibility about solving the budget crisis.

At \$64,000 a person, this is a complete waste of money. I cannot believe the rumors that say you will leave it open to appease the unions.

From a law enforcement point of view, this was to be used as a transitional place to handle "the worst of the worst." Well, if after 10 years for most people, this is no longer a transition. Nor is it housing your worst. You have to keep too many doctors around just to keep people alive. No longer the house of Jeff Fort.

Finally, the cost to humans is too high and lawsuits from this place are too great. This is a luxury the State cannot afford.

Try and sell this to the Feds along with Thompson.

Do not keep it open on my dime please.

John Fallon
611 Westmoreland
Waukegan, IL 60085

Please vote to close Tamms.

Toika Elligan

Please close Tamms it is a cruel and inhuman facility that is long overdue in closing.

Yvonne Davis

Dear Sir or Madam:

Please close Tamms. It is, both psychologically and physically, a cruel vicious cycle. The people become more ill than they were to start with!

They will have become impossibly "crippled" by the time they are finally released back into society. This will degrade the quality of "civilian" life, for the rest of us.

Punishment by imprisonment is heavy enough. Let us not exaggerate it with the supermax concept!

There is no substitute for a human touch. People often get into trouble because they have never had love.

Let us apply our brains and resources on how better to rehabilitate, not merely incarcerate.

Do we want to condemn others to Hell?

Why?

Do we think we are God? We are only humans, eager to point the finger at the other.

If our society is still caught up in punishment, let us at least do so with all moderation!

Janet Moon

Tamms (also called **stultification**) is the abasement of [pride](#), which creates mortification or leads to a state of being [humbled](#) or reduced to lowliness or [submission](#). It can be brought about through [bullying](#), [intimidation](#), physical or mental [mistreatment](#) or trickery, or by [embarrassment](#) if a person is revealed to have committed a socially or legally unacceptable act. Whereas [humility](#) can be sought alone as a means to de-emphasise the ego, humiliation must involve other person(s), though not necessarily directly or willingly.

Annette Franklin

To whom it may concern,

I stand against the closing of Tamms Correctional Center. The closing of this institution will be detrimental to the economy in this area, and I feel that it will also be detrimental to the safety and lives of the correctional staff in other facilities that this level of inmates will be sent to. It also concerns me that 91 inmates at Tamms Correctional Center have been classified "unfit" to be sent to other maximum institutions in the state of Illinois, but yet no one has addressed this issue or how it will be funded. In closing, those who vote for the closing of Tamms will NOT receive my vote in the upcoming election. I appreciate the time you have taken to read and acknowledge this message. Save lives, save Tamms!

Sincerely,
Fallon Clayton

Dear Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Governor Quinn's proposal to close the Tamms Supermax prison.

Amnesty International researchers have found conditions at Tamms to violate international standards for the humane treatment of prisoners, including prolonged isolation in solitary confinement, and the inadequate treatment of psychological issues arising from or exacerbated by that confinement.

The US has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention against Torture, both of which prohibit torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The UN Human Rights Committee has further emphasized that the absolute prohibition of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment under international law "relates not only to acts that cause physical pain but also to acts that cause mental suffering ..." and that prolonged solitary confinement may amount to torture or other ill-treatment. Both the Human Rights Committee and the UN Committee against Torture have criticized the excessively harsh conditions of isolation in several US high security facilities as incompatible with humane treatment.

The Governor's proposal provides Illinois with an opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to human rights and the rule of law. It is an opportunity to demonstrate that it is never necessary – and never acceptable – to violate an individual's basic rights (not to mention standards enshrined in international law) simply because that individual has been convicted of a crime.

We urge you to support the Governor's proposal and not spend Illinois taxpayers' money on a facility that violates international standards for the care and treatment of prisoners.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rachel Baumer
8606 Quarry Ridge Ln Unit H
Woodbury, MN 55125-5504

Dear folks

All types of prison conditions in which the unusual separation of prisoners is practiced are practicing cruel and unusual punishment. By unusual separation of prisoners, I'm talking about preventing the opportunity for casual conversation of the type ordinarily engaged in by the population at large. That is, such conversation is voluntary, can range from intense opinionated speech to quiet "offhand" speech, and/or is emotional or factual. Those of us on the outside of a prison know what the speech of ordinary persons is like -- we see and hear it as we move about our environment every day.

Preventing a prisoner from engaging with others is psychologically harmful even if not painful to the prisoner or to onlookers. We know that the brain is enhanced and stimulated by the speech of others. Isolation of any kind (that is, keeping prisoners from engaging in contact with others) is damaging to prisoners, with a host of negative outcomes not yet fully understood.

Despite the fact that prisoners are by their very nature being punished, it is simply wrong to damage them neuropsychologically. That is, despite their bad behavior on the outside, once we have them in custody, we are tasked with treating them in a way that does not further harm them. The fact that they are in a prison facility, perhaps for long periods, does not change this fact.

It is well-known that prisoners may engage in gang activity when they're allowed to talk together. Despite the fact that this is unfortunate and even dangerous, the possibility of gang activity is no reason to prevent association. For one thing, affiliative and/or social behaviors (that is, wanting to talk to others, or to engage in group activity) are hallmarks of human behavior that extend back for thousands of years. To put it another way, talking about gang activity may be a positive sign. Preventing actual harm from group-based behaviors is a wholly separate problem. Prisons must be ready to deal with such problems through education, counseling, etc. The possibility of gang activity is no reason to prevent prisoner interaction.

For these reasons, Tamms ought to be closed.

Greg Nichols, Ph.D.

Hello,

My name is Wendy Burgess and I live in Park Ridge, IL. I'm writing to request that you approve Governor Quinn's recommendation to close the Tamms Supermax Prison. Not only is this prison inhumane and unethical, but it is expensive and not even half full. Let's use our resources elsewhere than at a prison that is not needed and worse, not humane.

I am a proponent of closing the Tamms Supermax prison.

Thank you for your consideration.

Wendy Burgess
